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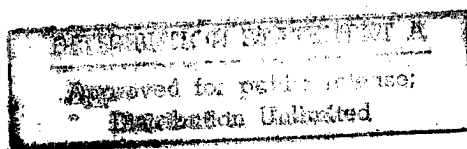
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USSR Report

MILITARY AFFAIRS

MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

No. 4, April 1984



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Except where indicated otherwise in the table of contents the following is a complete translation of the Russian-language monthly journal VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL.

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WORLD WAR II: GOALS, PROBLEMS OF AIR DEFENSE DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 12-19

[Article by Mar Avn A. Koldunov, commander-in-chief of the Air Defense Troops and USSR deputy minister of defense, twice Hero of the Soviet Union: "The Organization and Conduct of Air Defense from the Experience of the Initial Period of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Air Defense Troops gained great experience in conducting combat. The initial period of the war was the most difficult and intense as here the troops had to repel surprise massed enemy air strikes and conduct combat operations under the difficult conditions of the air situation and the retreat of the Soviet troops into the interior of the nation's territory.

The Communist Party Central Committee and the Soviet government gave constant attention to the air defense questions. During the years which preceded the Great Patriotic War, the Air Defense Troops had been provided with new combat equipment. New units and formations were organized, the organizational structure was improved and the necessary theoretical research was carried out in the area of the organizational development and combat employment of the Air Defense Troops considering the experience of employing bomber aviation and its increased capabilities in the course of the commenced World War II.

As a total by the start of the Great Patriotic War, the National Air Defense Troops included 13 operational air defense field forces (zones) and these included air defense corps, divisions and separate brigades, separate antiaircraft artillery regiments, separate antiaircraft battalions and a number of other units. Their effective strength was 3,329 medium-caliber antiaircraft guns, 330 small-caliber antiaircraft guns, 650 antiaircraft machine guns, 1,500 antiaircraft searchlights, 850 barrage balloons and 45 radars. The 40 fighter air regiments which had been assigned from the Air Forces for national air defense purposes had around 1,500 aircraft.¹

In organizational terms, the air defense zones included all the ground air defense units (with the exception of troop air defenses) located on the territory of the military districts. The zone commanders were simultaneously the assistant commanders of the military districts for air defense. The fighter aviation

assigned for air defense purposes was not part of the zones and was under the Air Forces commanders of the military districts. The troop antiaircraft artillery also was not part of the air defense zones and was directly led by the artillery chiefs of the all-arms formations.

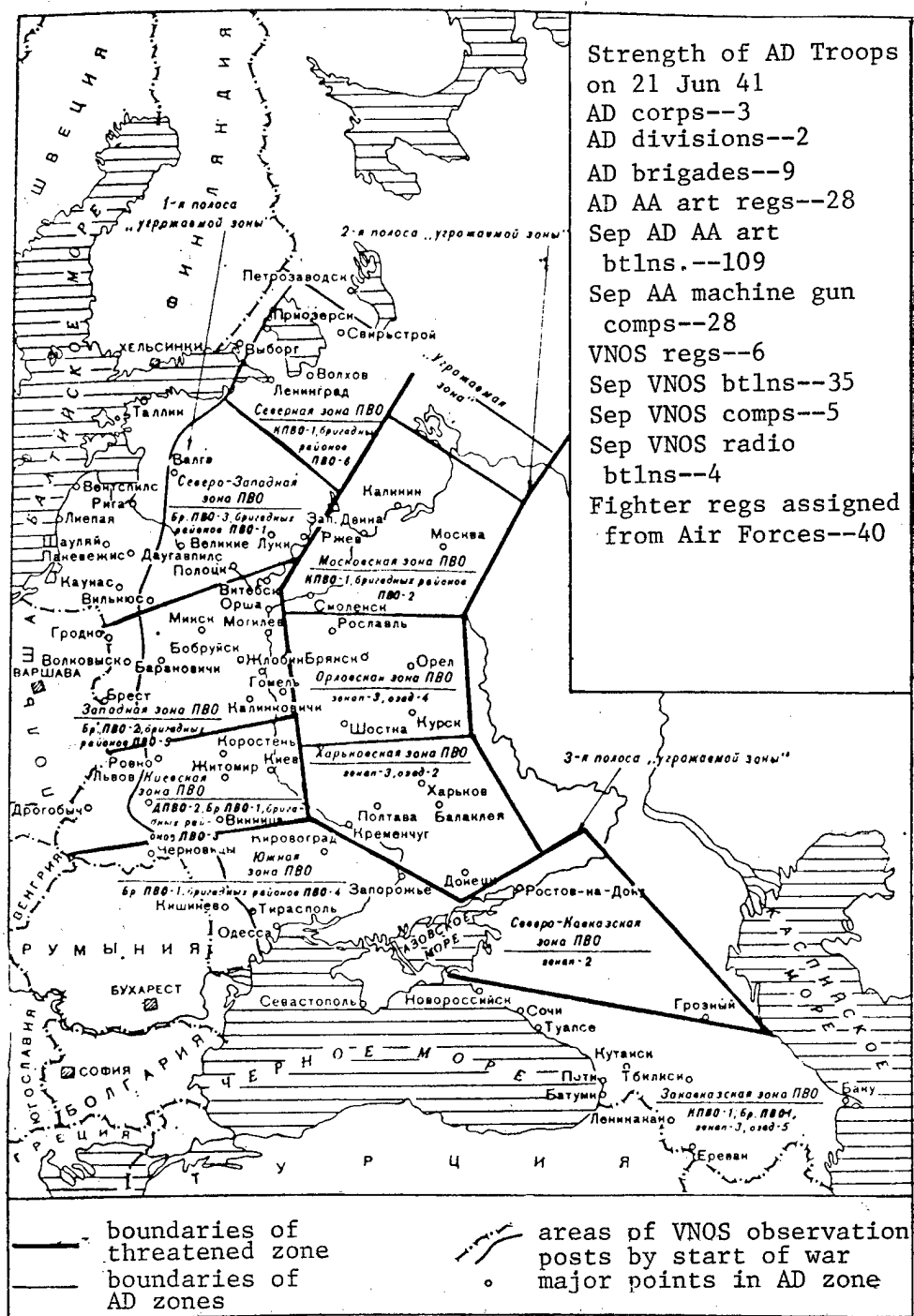
Overall leadership over air defense was divided by the Main Air Defense Directorate of the Red Army and this was directly under the USSR People's Commissariat of Defense [NKO]. It was in charge of the questions of planning, accounting, weaponry and combat training. However, the Main Air Defense Directorate did not control the functions involved in the operational leadership of air defense. This was the responsibility of the General Staff.

The basic forces of the Air Defense Troops were stationed in the so-called threatened zone along the western state frontier and in the Transcaucasus in a zone 500-600 km deep (see the diagram). Here were over 90 percent of the anti-aircraft artillery batteries and virtually all the fighter aviation assigned for air defense purposes. Particular attention was given to covering installations on the territory of the five western border military districts (Leningrad, Baltic, Separate Western and Kiev and Odessa). Within the five air defense zones (Northern, Northwestern, Western, Kiev and Southern) in these military districts was a significant amount of fighter aviation and antiaircraft artillery. Here a larger portion of the fighter air regiments in the air defense border zones was assigned to cover Leningrad and Kiev. The troops of the western air defense zones were a part of the first strategic echelon of the Soviet Armed Forces.² Great attention was given to defending the three major administrative-political and industrial centers of the nation--Moscow, Leningrad and Baku--against the air enemy. Each of these was covered by an air defense corps.

The basic mission set by the Nazi Command for its air forces at the outset of the war was to win air superiority and support the Nazi armies in the main sectors. Thus, the directive issued as a supplement to the Barbarossa Plan on 31 January 1941 stated: "In the first stage of the operation the air force should concentrate all its efforts on combating enemy aviation and on direct support for the ground troops. Strikes against industrial centers can be made not before the operational goals set for the ground forces have been achieved."³

By the beginning of the attack on the Soviet Union, the Nazi Command at airfields in the eastern areas of Germany, in Poland and partially in Finland, Romania and Hungary had concentrated four air fleets of the five existing in the Luftwaffe as well as the Finnish, Romanian and Hungarian aviation numbering 4,980 combat aircraft.⁴

The treacherous attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941 started with a massed incursion of enemy aviation into Soviet air space along the entire western frontier from the Baltic to the Black Seas to a depth of up to 400 km. The basic efforts of the enemy aviation in the first, strongest raid at dawn and then in subsequent ones to noon of 22 June were concentrated on destroying our aircraft at airfields in direct proximity to the frontier. Simultaneously with the raids on the airfields the Nazi airplanes during the first day of the war made massed raids against railroad junctions and Soviet troop groupings located in the border zone.



Boundaries of Zones and Fighting Strength of Air Defense Troops by the Start of the Great Patriotic War

The troops of the western border air defense zones began fighting enemy aviation literally from the first minutes of the war. Due to the heavy losses of our aviation in the border military districts during the first day of the war, the Nazi Air Force succeeded temporarily in seizing the initiative and subsequently holding strategic air supremacy. This significantly complicated the carrying out of combat missions by the Air Defense Troops since in a number of instances they had to repel enemy air raids without proper support and aid from our frontal [tactical] fighters.

The enemy concentrated the main Luftwaffe efforts on the western and northwestern sectors. Within the boundaries of the Western Air Defense Zone on the first day of the war, many cities were subjected to enemy air raids including such ones as Brest, Grodno, Belostok, Kobrin and Baranovichi. Several successive raids were made against particularly important installations. Thus, Grodno was subjected to six air raids and the airfield in the region of Pruzhany to four. All in all, 120 bombers were involved in the raids.

On the second day of the war, the heaviest raids were made against Minsk. Eleven times the enemy bombed the airfield, the city and the rail junction. The 7th Air Defense Brigade which was defending Minsk in 3 days of fighting destroyed 13 enemy aircraft and in the battles for Borisov where it was forced to retreat, it shot down 11 aircraft.⁵

On 24 June, the enemy conducted raids against Vitebsk, Orsha, Mogilev and Gomel. Due to the successful actions by units of the Gomel Brigade Air Defense Region, regardless of the fierce daily bombings, the rail junction and bridges in Gomel survived until the retreat of our troops.

During the first days of the war, the units of the Northwestern Air Defense Zone had to fight under particularly difficult conditions as the organizing of these units had just been completed. Regardless of this, the antiaircraft artillery of the 14th Air Defense Brigade which was covering Kaunas during the first day of the war destroyed 7 enemy aircraft. Subsequently, the brigade covered the retreat of the units of the 11th Army from Kaunas. The 10th Air Defense Brigade covering Riga had to fight under analogous conditions.⁶

On the southern wing of the Soviet-German Front, where the units of the Kiev and Southern Air Defense Zones were fighting, the airfields, rail junctions, bridges and cities were subjected to particularly heavy bombing in the zone of the most active enemy ground troop operations.

During the first day of the war the enemy aviation raided Lvov, Stanislaw, Rovno, Chernovtsy, Kishinev, Bendery, Izmail, on the second day Zhitomir, Korosten, Shepetovka and Odessa. On 26 June within the boundaries of the Kiev Air Defense Zone, enemy bombers in large groups bombed Kiev, Kazatin, Shepetovka, Korosten, Zhitomir, Brody, Stryi, Sambor, Peremyshl, Lvov, Novograd-Volynskiy and others as well as the airfields and bridges across the Dnepr at Kiev, Kremenchug and Dnepropetrovsk.

Units of the Kiev and Southern Air Defense Zones successfully drove off the raids by great effort, causing significant losses to the enemy aviation. Thus, the air defense fighter and antiaircraft artillery units which covered Kiev

and installations in its area over the first 5 days of the war destroyed 93 German aircraft. Over this same period, units of the 4th Air Defense Division which were defending Lvov shot down 25 bombers while the 11th Air Defense Brigade which covered the Drogobych oil fields destroyed 15 enemy aircraft.⁷

On the first day of the war, the 123d Fighter Air Regiment of the 10th Separate Air Division under the command of Maj V. N. Surin conducted fierce air battles against superior enemy forces in the region of Brest. The fighter pilot P. S. Ryabtsev, when he had run out of ammunition, rammed an enemy bomber and himself parachuted safely to ground. This was one of the first rammings in the Great Patriotic War. During the day the regimen's flyers downed 30 enemy aircraft.

During the first days of the war, the fighter pilots on the distant approaches to Leningrad showed unprecedented valor. Jr Lts P. T. Kharitonov and S. I. Zdorovtsev rammed enemy bombers while Jr Lt M. P. Zhukov drove a German plane into Lake Pskov. On 8 July 1941, the first Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet was promulgated during the years of the Great Patriotic War on awarding the title of Hero of the Soviet Union to the Soviet military, including the valorous air defense pilots M. P. Zhukov, S. I. Zdorovtsev and P. T. Kharitonov.

The units, formations and staffs of all the Armed Services as well as the governmental institutions on the spot and in the Center were warned of enemy air raids basically by the aircraft warning service [VNOS] of the national air defenses. The importance of this service during the initial period of the war was convincingly brought out by Col Gen Art N. N. Voronov who at that time was the chief of the Main Air Defense Directorate: "The VNOS posts constantly provided information not only on the air but also the ground situation. Along the entire extent of our western frontiers the Germans had gone over to the offensive.... The men of the VNOS service heroically carried out their duty. Many of them, not having received the order to retreat, remained at their post to the last opportunity and reported on the German units, tanks and weapons passing them by. Our men, disdaining the danger, radioed this information at times until several seconds before their death. Often only from this information was Moscow able to determine the actual situation on the front."⁸

Along with repelling the enemy air raids, many air defense units in a difficult situation had to simultaneously fight enemy tanks and infantry. Often this mission became the main one. The fighter aviation of the air defense zones assigned for air defense purposes but being under the air force commanders of the fronts in a majority of instances was used to carry out missions involving support for the combat operations of the all-arms formations.

Under the difficult conditions of the initial period of the war, the Communist Party and Soviet government adopted additional measures to strengthen air defenses. Particular attention was given to the Moscow air defenses. According to the Decree of the USSR State Defense Committee [GKO] of 9 July 1941 "On Moscow Air Defenses," the number of fighter air regiments was more than tripled, several additional antiaircraft artillery regiments were organized and the network of barrage balloon posts was almost tripled.⁹ As a result by the beginning of the massed Nazi air raids against our capital, the enemy was opposed by a powerful air defense system. Moscow was one of the capitals

which, during World War II, did not suffer substantial damage from enemy air raids and this is the most important and most convincing evidence for the effectiveness of the air defenses.

The chief result in the combat activities of the Air Defense Troops in the initial period of the war was the fact that they, under the conditions of the surprise attack by Nazi Germany, maintained their fighting capability and in fighting simultaneously against enemy tanks and infantry, protected a larger portion of the installations covered by them against destruction from the air until they were forced to be left by the ground troops who were retreating to the east. Particularly important is the fact that the Air Defense Troops did not permit a serious disrupting in the operation of the lines of communications in the zone of the front. The lines of communications operated without protracted interruptions until our troops had pulled out of the defended areas. Nazi aviation did not succeed in destroying the strategically important bridges across the Berezina, Dnestr and other major rivers. The enemy suffered substantial losses. Just from 22 June through 3 July 1941, the units of the border air defense zones destroyed around 150 aircraft.¹⁰

Along with the positive aspects in the organization of air defenses prior to the war, there were also shortcomings and oversights which had to be eliminated in the very course of combat.

The directive promulgated by the USSR People's Commissar of Defense of 25 April 1941 envisaged the organizing of 166 antiaircraft artillery batteries for covering airfields and other installations of the Red Army Air Forces.¹¹ However, due to the lack of the required amount of materiel, these instructions could only be carried out in 1943. By the start of the war, the airfields were covered by an insignificant number of TOE antiaircraft weapons which were under the control of the airfield service battalions.

The initial period of the war also showed that troop air defenses should be organized ahead of time and have the required resources. At that time in the troop air defenses, on a majority of the fronts, for every division there was an average of two or three guns (2.7 on the Northwestern Front, 2 on the Western, 3.2 on the Central and 2.8 on the Leningrad) and 5.8 guns only on the Southern Front. Certain armies did not have any medium-caliber antiaircraft artillery while others did not have any small-caliber. The lack of men and weapons assigned for troop air defenses and their scattering over the all-arms formations told negatively on the conduct of air defense.

The practice of command and control of the Air Defense Troops both on the operational and tactical levels, regardless of the shortness of the initial period, convincingly showed that the dependable air defense of the major centers, rayons and installations was a task of primary importance which could not be carried out by isolated air defense forces under different levels of command: the antiaircraft artillery and other ground weapons (with the exception of troop air defenses) under the commanders of the air defense zones of the military districts (fronts) and the fighter aviation assigned for air defense purposes under the commanders of the air forces of the military districts (fronts). Only unified command over all the air defense forces (including the air defense fighter aviation) could ensure their coordinated actions. This was a

most important condition for successfully combating the air enemy. The shortcomings existing in this question during the initial period of the war were subsequently eliminated.

On the basis of the experience in the initial period of the war, a fundamental reorganization of the Air Defense Troops was carried out in accord with the GKO decree of 9 November 1941. The position of commander of the Air Defense Troops of the nation's territory (he was also the deputy people's commissar of defense for national air defense) was established and the necessary command bodies were organized. All the national air defense formations and units were removed from the military districts and fronts and put under the commander of the National Air Defense Troops. Corps and divisional regions were organized instead of the zones which had existed in the European USSR. The fighter aviation formations and units which were assigned for air defense purposes were operationally put under the commander of the National Air Defense Troops and on the spot under the commanders of the corps and divisional air defense regions. The logical conclusion to this reorganization was the complete subordination of the fighter aviation assigned to cover national installations to the air defense command in January 1942.

As a result of the measures carried out, the National Air Defense Troops assumed all the basic characteristics of an independent Armed Service. The presence of a unified air defense command made it possible to utilize most effectively the air defense resources on a national scale in accord with the requirements of the specific strategic situation. Conditions were created for flexibly maneuvering the Air Defense Forces to the threatened sectors and for effectively influencing the modernizing of equipment and elaborating air defense theory.

The initial period of the war also disclosed a need to reorganize the air defense bodies of the Ground Forces. The positions were introduced of deputy chiefs of air defense artillery for the fronts and armies; responsibility for air defense of the formations was entrusted to the artillery chiefs of the divisions. The corresponding organization was established under the artillery chief of the Soviet Army. The organizing of a unified air defense command for the troop formations and field forces played a positive role in their command and control as the methods of organizing troop cover were improved. In addition, the fronts began to receive more weapons.

The massed surprise actions by enemy aviation in the initial period of the war showed that the air defense system for both the major installations of the country as well as the troops not only should be organized ahead of time but also be in constant combat readiness for repelling the air enemy during the day and at night and under any weather conditions. The constant combat readiness of the Air Defense Troops was a crucial factor in their successful actions. As was shown by the first hours and days of the war there was not the time required for deploying the troops and taking up battle positions.

Regardless of the fact that great importance was given to constant combat readiness, the Air Defense Troops entered the war under difficult conditions. They were deployed and took up battle positions in a situation of an enemy invasion and enemy air strikes against major installations in the border air defense

zones. The process of readying the troops to repel air raids had been carried out unevenly and the units and formations were readied to carry out the missions assigned to them at different times. While the air defense antiaircraft artillery units positioned 200-250 km from the western frontier had been deployed in firing positions by the morning of 22 June 1941, the others located at a greater depth were still in the camps and began moving up to their objectives later. Thus, the 18th Separate Antiaircraft Artillery Division which was to cover the rail bridge over the Dnestr at Rybnitsa arrived from the Akkerman camps at its destination only 6 days after the start of the war. The air defense duty batteries in Moscow were ready for combat by 0300 hours on 22 June. By 1900 hours, over 70 percent of the batteries out of the total number had assumed their firing positions and by 1800 hours on 23 June the entire Moscow air defense system was ready to repel air raids. Units of the Leningrad air defenses completed the taking up of battle formations by midday on 22 June 1941. However, the newly organized units were not completely supplied with materiel.

As a whole, the air defenses of the points and installations located in the 500-600-km belt along the western frontier as well as the Moscow and Leningrad air defenses were deployed and ready to repel enemy aviation by the end of the second day of the war. The surprise actions of the latter confirmed that the air defense units covering troops and installations not only in the border zone but also in the interior of the nation should be in constant combat readiness to repel an enemy attack.

An analysis of the initial period of the Great Patriotic War as well as local wars shows that there is a number of common features in the organizing and conduct of air defense. One of these is the clash of the air forces and air defense. Here the air forces were the main strike force in carrying out the operational and strategic tasks in the initial period of the war while air defense was the crucial condition for maintaining the military-economic potential of the nation and the combat capability of the armed forces.

The initial periods of wars for the air defenses of various countries with a surprise attack by the aggressor have been particularly complex and onerous and have necessitated the complete manifesting of its capabilities and at the same time disclosed all the shortcomings, mistakes and oversights made in its organization prior to the outbreak of combat.

There has been a constant tendency for the enemy to make the first surprise massed strike from the air against airfields, the positions of the air defense troops, command and control facilities and other installations in order to win air supremacy, to paralyze the enemy's will and deprive it of the means for organized resistance. The struggle to win and maintain air supremacy has been one of the main tasks for the enemy air forces in the initial period of a war and an important prerequisite for the successful operations of the ground troops and naval forces.

In line with the increased combat capabilities of the air forces, the importance of surprise in their operations has increased. The experience of local wars has shown that the air defense resources play the basic role in repelling the surprise massed enemy strikes from the air and thwarting its air operations in the initial period of a war.

Thus, the general principles in organizing and conducting air defense during the initial period of a war have been: reliance on a previously organized air defense system before the start of the war; the adjusting of the air defense plans and their implementation prior to the start and in the course of the initial period of the war in accord with the actually developing situation; maintaining high combat readiness of the Air Defense Troops; combining the air defense resources under a unified command both on the operational and tactical levels; the deep operational and combat configuration of the air defense system; the massing of the air defense resources for a dependable defense of the most important installations and troop groupings; integrated use of all the air defense resources for combating the air enemy on the basis of their close cooperation; activeness, the establishing of superiority in forces on the probable routes of enemy air raids, the maneuvering of resources and the assigning of reserves; all-round support for combat.

In carrying out most difficult tasks today, the air defense troops are endeavoring to more fully and thoroughly assess the lessons of the Great Patriotic War, particularly in its initial period.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], vol 2, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 317.
- 2 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], vol 4, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, p 25.
- 3 "Sovershenno sekretno! Tol'ko dlya komandovaniya!" [Top Secret! For Command Eyes Only!], Moscow, Nauka, 1967, p 167.
- 4 "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny...", vol 4, p 21.
- 5 TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 72, inv. 34961, file 54, sheet 442; inv. 34954, file 2, sheet 45.
- 6 Ibid., inv. 12274, file 38, p 153.
- 7 "Voyska protivovozdushnoy oborony strany. Istoricheskiy ocherk" [The National Air Defense Troops. Historical Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 75.
- 8 N. N. Voronov, "Na sluzhbe voyennoy" [In Military Service], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1963, p 177.
- 9 "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," vol 6, 1978, p 583.
- 10 TsAMO SSSR, folio 72, inv. 12274, file 2, sheets 234-250.
- 11 Ibid., folio 35, inv. 228603, file 1, sheets 3-7.

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WORLD WAR II: PARRYING OF ENEMY COUNTERSTRIKES ANALYZED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 20-31

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Lt Gen A. Yevseyev: "Repelling Counterstrikes by Large Enemy Groupings in the Course of Front-Level Offensive Operations in the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] In endeavoring at any price to hold the numerous defensive lines which have been previously prepared in depth and thereby defer its final defeat in the war, the Nazi Command in the course of the offensive operations by the Soviet Army made desperate attempts to eliminate the formed breaches, to defeat the assault groupings of the fronts and armies and prevent the development of the offensive to a great depth. In carrying out these missions the main role was assigned to the counterstrike groupings. As experience was to show, there was not a single major offensive operation by the Soviet troops during which the enemy did not undertake a counterstrike. The counterstrikes were made with particularly significant forces in the concluding period of the war.

The data describing the goals set by the Wehrmacht Command for the counterstrike groupings, their effective strength, the length of active operations and the depth of advance in the major offensive operations by the Soviet Army are given in the table. An analysis of these makes it possible to conclude that in many offensive operations by the Soviet troops, the enemy made strong counterstrikes in the interests of relieving their surrounded groupings. In a number of operations counterstrikes were undertaken in the aim of checking a commenced offensive by the troops of the fronts or the committing of their mobile groups to the breakthrough. By making counterstrikes, the Wehrmacht Command endeavored to eliminate the bridgeheads captured by the advancing troops on major water obstacles. In individual operations surrounded enemy groupings undertook counterstrikes in the aim of restoring their land lines of communications.

The experience of many offensive operations by the fronts points to the fact that for making a counterstrike the enemy troops, as a rule, took up deployment lines and carried out air and artillery softening up. At times, the counterstrike grouping went over to an offensive without a halt. In all instances the counterstrike was made on relatively narrow sectors and on a solid front.

Counterstrikes were undertaken by the Nazi Command in various stages of the offensive operations. Most often these were made at the outset of the offensive.

Table
Certain Data on Counterstrikes by Nazi Troops in Individual Offensive Operations of Soviet Army*

Goals set for counter- striking groupings	Operations in which counterstrikes were undertaken	Resources in- volved in counterstrike	Region of counterstrike	Duration of enemy actions		Depth of enemy advance km
				start	end	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Relieving surrounded grouping of one's troops	Counteroffensive at Stalingrad, 1942	3 tk. div. 4 inf. div. 2 cav. div. 1 airf. div. 8 tk. div.	Kotelni- kovskiy W of Rizino, Yerki SE of Komarno	12 Dec	23 Dec	to 70
	Korsun-Shevchen- kovskiy, 1944 Budapest, 1945	3 tk. div. 3 inf. div. units of 2 tk. div. 7 tk. div. 4 inf. div. 1 tk. div. 2 mech. div. units of 3 tk. div. 2 sep. tk. brig.	SW of Szekesfe- hervar	11 Feb night of 2 Jan	17 Feb 6 Jan	20-25 to 30
Defeating assault grouping of front	Belgorod- Kharkov, 1943	7 tk. div. 4 inf. div. 1 tk. div. 2 mech. div. units of 3 tk. div. 2 sep. tk. brig.	Akhtyrka	18 Jan	26 Jan	to 60
	Kiev, 1943	7 tk. div. 1 mech. div. 7 inf. div. to 16 divs.	Zhitomir, Fastov	15 Nov	25 Nov	to 40
	Zhitomir, Berdichev, 1944	2 tk. div.	E of Vinnitsa, NW of Uman NW of Zborow N of Chmielnik	11 Jan	23-24 Jan	25-30
Eliminating break- through of defenses	Lwow-Sandomierz, 1944 Vistula-Oder, 1945	1 tk. corps		15 Jul 13 Jan	16 Jul 13 Jan	2-4 --

Table (con't.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Checking commitment to breakthrough of mobile group of 2d Belorussian Front	East Prussian, 1945	1 tk. div. 2 mech. div.	Ciechanow	17 Jan	17 Jan	--
Eliminating captured bridgehead on major river	Lwow-Sandomierz, 1944	2 tk. div. 1 mech. div.	Szydlow	11 Aug	12 Aug	8-10
Restoring land lines of communications by encircled grouping	East Prussian, 1945	1 tk. div. 2 mech. div. 4 inf. div. assault gun brig.	Liebstadt	27 Jan	30 Jan	3-5

* "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II] Vols. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10; "Sovetskaya Voennoye Entsiklopediya [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], Vols. 1, 2, 4; "Operatsii Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny 1941-1945" [Operations of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Vols. 3, 4; "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], Vols. 4, 5.

In this instance the enemy employed, as a rule, the army reserves consisting of two or three divisions and the defending troops. The advancing fronts by this time still had not committed the reserves and second echelons to combat and this to a definite degree made it easier to carry out the task of defeating the counterstrike grouping. However, the repelling of the enemy counterstrikes with the development of the offensive in the operational depth and particularly in the concluding stage of the offensive operations was carried out in a difficult situation. This is explained by the fact that the advancing troops of the fronts by this time were ordinarily fighting in areas that were broader than at the outset, their second echelons and reserves had already been committed, their formations and units had significant losses and the rear services were stretched out to a great depth.

The difficulty of carrying out the mission of defeating large enemy counterstrike groupings in developing the offensive in the operational depth of the enemy defenses was that combat operations were organized, as a rule, in a very short period of time. For making the counterstrikes, the Nazi Command in a majority of instances concentrated significant troop groupings numbering from 8 to 16 divisions, predominantly tank and motorized having many tanks, assault guns and field artillery. Their combat operations were supported by large air forces. A predominant superiority in men and weapons was created in the sectors of making the counterstrikes. Thus, in making the counterstrike in the area of Komarno in January 1945, on the sector of the main thrust, the Nazi troops surpassed the Soviet ones by 11-fold for artillery and by 13-fold for tanks. In making the counterstrike in the area of Szekesfehervar, the enemy grouping included up to 550 tanks, 750 guns and mortars. Their advance was supported by the aviation of the 4th Air Fleet.¹

Use of a large number of men and weapons in the counterstrikes made it possible for the enemy to establish significant operational densities on narrow sectors.

Under these conditions a stubborn struggle for seizing and retaining the initiative developed in the sector of making the counterstrike. But, as the experience of the last war showed, it was not possible as a rule to check the counterstrikes being prepared by the enemy, that is, not to permit them to be made. At best, during the period of the moving up and concentrating of the enemy counterstrike groupings, the troops of the fronts succeeded only in weakening their strength somewhat. This was explained primarily by the insufficient power and range of the weapons as well as by the limited opportunities of reconnaissance. Due to this, the Soviet troops were forced to fight to repel the enemy counterstrikes and defeat the assault groupings.

It is quite obvious that the successful repelling of the counterstrikes made by large enemy groupings depended largely upon the art of the military leaders, the efficiency of the staffs as well as the heroism and combat skill of the troops. This required profound operational foresight, a rapid response to the developing situation, determining the most effective methods of action and implementing a large number of measures aimed at thwarting the plans of the Nazi Command.

The experience of the war provided convincing confirmation that the course and outcome of combat to repel counterstrikes by large enemy groupings had direct bearing on the further development of the offensive operations and on the pace

and depth of the troop offensive. The carrying out of this task necessitated the involvement of a large number of men and weapons. However, the interests of achieving the ultimate aims of the operations necessitated that the basic efforts of the fronts be focused on developing the offensive in depth and on carrying out the set missions. For this reason for repelling the counterstrikes the commanders of the fronts always endeavored to employ primarily aviation, artillery, antitank reserves, engineer troops and all-arms formations fighting directly in the sectors of the thrusts by the enemy groupings. However, in the necessary instances reserves and second echelons were also committed to battle.

The repelling of counterstrikes by large groupings of Nazi troops was organized directly by the commands and staffs of the fronts and armies.

At the same time Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] carefully monitored the moving up of the operational-strategic enemy reserves to the sectors of the forthcoming counterstrikes, it took measures to thwart their concentration, in certain instances it made available the required resources to the commanders of the fronts and sometimes determined the methods of action for the troops in repelling the counterstrikes and defeating the enemy assault groupings. Thus, in order to close the arising breach in the zone of the 51st Army which was fighting on the sector of the counterstrike by the Kotelnikovskiy grouping of enemy groupings, on the basis of a decision of the GKO [State Defense Committee], formations of the 2d Guards Army from the reserve of Headquarters by a forced march advanced to the Myshkova River with the mission, together with the 51st Army, of routing the enemy assault grouping and capturing Kotelnikovskiy. In addition, Headquarters assigned the VI Mechanized Corps from its reserve to reinforce the Stalingrad Front. Simultaneously it made substantial changes in the overall conception of Operation Saturn. Instead of a deep thrust toward Rostov, the main efforts of the Southwestern Front were aimed at defeating the German Army Group Don.

At the beginning of August 1943, with the detecting of the moving up of enemy reserves into the area of Kharkov, Headquarters set the mission of preventing the regrouping of the Nazi troops. As the enemy formations moved up, along the front line attacks were made against them by formations of the 17th Air Army of the Southwestern Front and later the 5th and 2d Air Armies of the Voronezh and Steppe Fronts as well as the long-range aviation. On a number of rail sections the partisans organized sabotage.² Subsequently, in anticipating the possibility of a major counterstrike from the area of Akhtyrka, Headquarters reinforced the Voronezh Front turning over to it the 47th Army from its reserve and given the mission together with a portion of the forces from the 40th Army to make an attack from the north in the flank and rear of the enemy troops deployed in the area of Akhtyrka (Diagram 1). Simultaneously, the 4th Guards Army which had arrived from the Headquarters reserve was concentrated in this area.³

Having detected the concentration of a large enemy grouping on the Kiev sector in November 1943, Headquarters ordered that the offensive of the troops of the First Ukrainian Front be halted to the west of Zhitomir and that the left flank of the 38th Army be reinforced in the sector of Fastov and Tripolye with artillery, tanks, engineer units and not allow the enemy to break through.

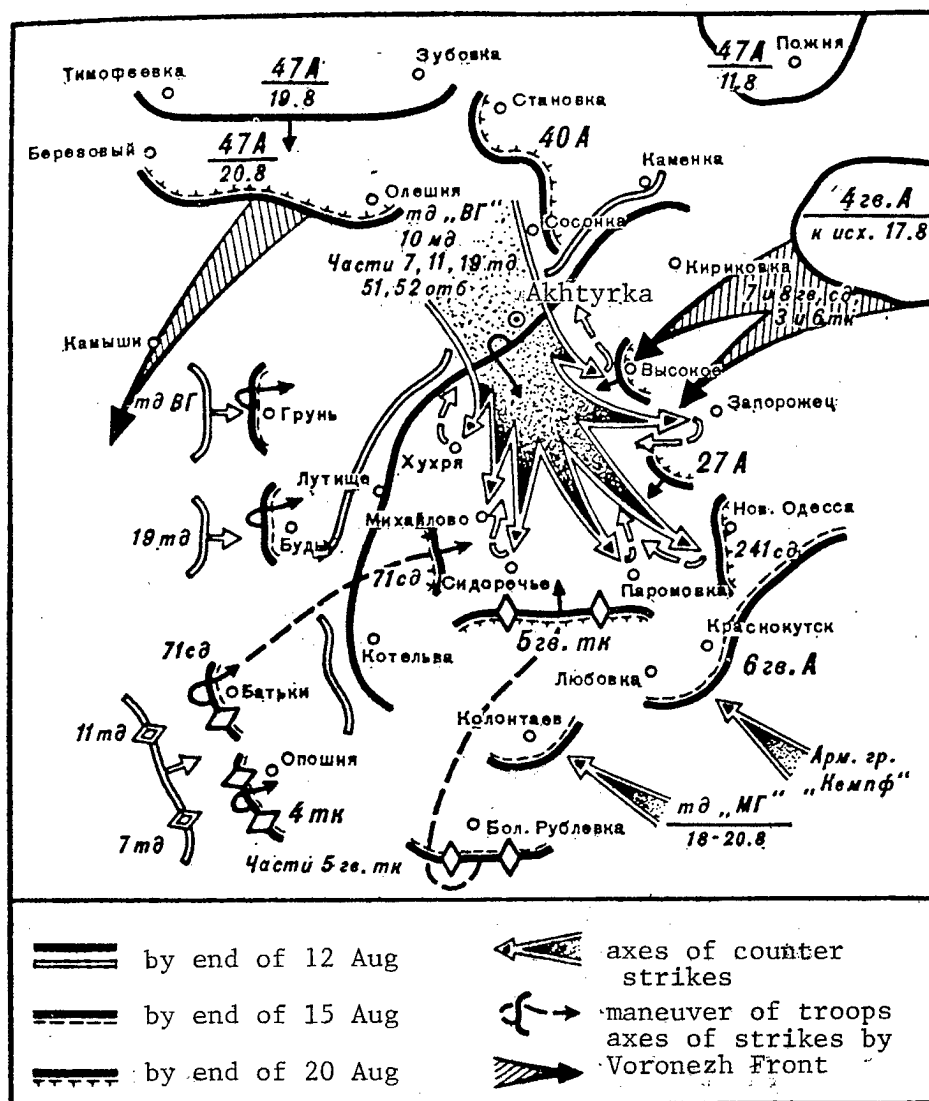


Diagram 1. Repelling the Counterstrike by Nazi Troops in the Area of Akhtyrka 18-20 August 1943

The offensive by the troops on the left wing of the Second Ukrainian Front, in being carried out upon the instructions of Headquarters, played a major role in thwarting the first enemy counterstrike against Budapest. The thrust was made by the 7th Guards Army and 6th Guards Tank Army along the left bank of the Danube toward the advancing troops of the Third Ukrainian Front (Diagram 2).

In the activities of the command and staffs of the fronts in repelling the enemy counterstrikes, the organizing of reconnaissance assumed primary significance. It was important to promptly detect the enemy's intentions and determine the strength, direction and time of actions of its counterstrike groupings. Due to good reconnaissance the command of the fronts and the armies in a majority of instances long before the start of the counterstrikes had succeeded in guessing the plans of the Nazi Command and taking effective measures to weaken

its strength. Conversely, as a consequence of the insufficiently precise organization of reconnaissance, the High Command of the Southwestern Sector in May 1942 was unable to promptly detect the powerful groupings established by the Nazi Command for making a counterstrike. As a result, the counterstrike was a surprise. Also not promptly discovered was the concentration of two enemy tank divisions ready to make a counterstrike against the troops of the 38th Army at the beginning of the Lvov-Sandomierz Operation. As a consequence of this, the Nazi troops succeeded not only in halting the army's advance but also to push its formations back by 2-4 km.

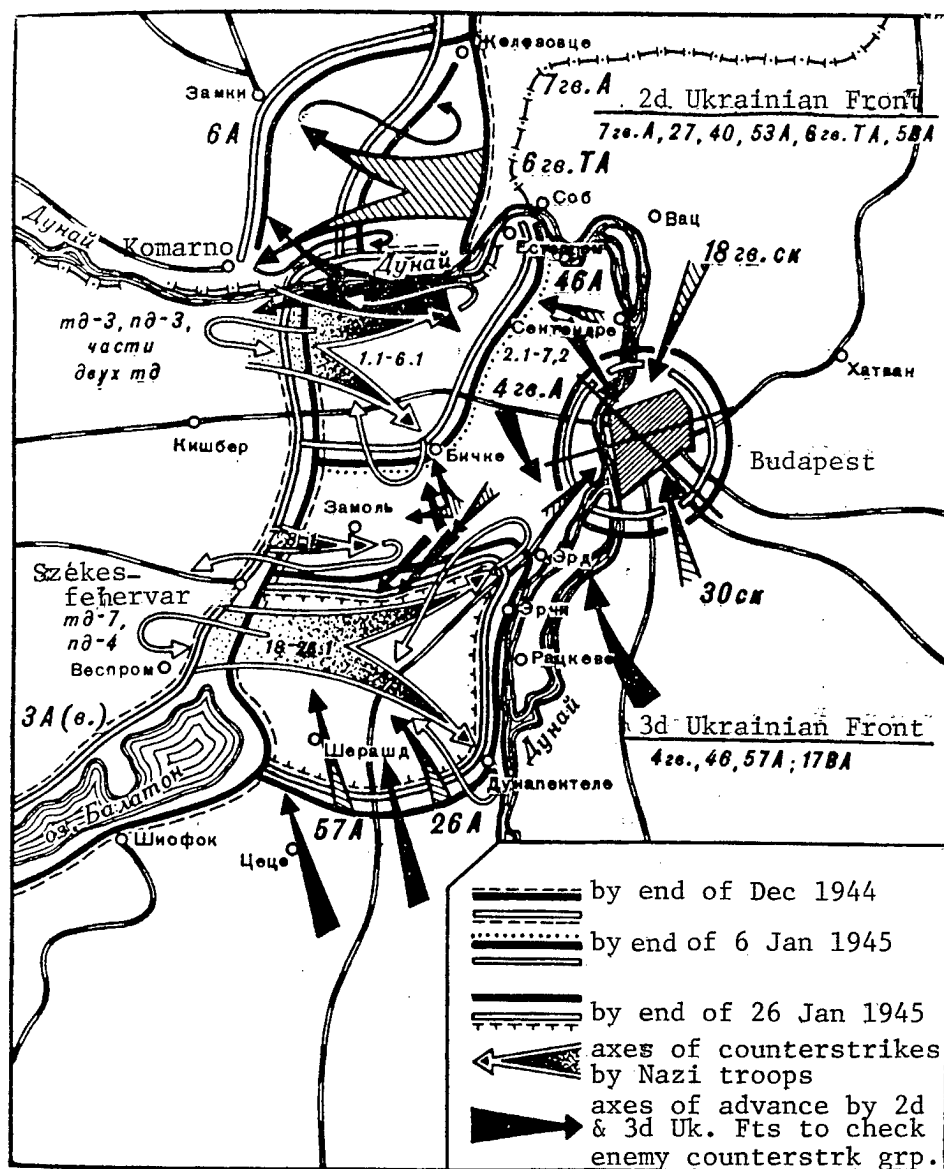


Diagram 2. Repelling Counterstrikes by Nazi Troops in Regions of Komarno and Szekesfehervar, January 1945

The command of the fronts undertook decisive measures to quickly alter the balance of forces in its favor and by decisive actions to hit the counter-attack groupings and then complete their rout. This was achieved by moving up the existing reserves to the threatened sector as well as by maneuvering men and weapons from other sections of the front. For example, with the threatening of an attack by Nazi troops in the course of the Kiev Operation, in addition to reinforcing the left flank of the 38th Army, upon orders of the commander of the First Ukrainian Front, Army Gen N. F. Vatutin, divisions taken away from the Bukrin and Shchukin bridgeheads as well as formations previously assigned to reinforce the 38th and 60th Armies were regrouped into the area of Vasilkov and Fastov.

In the Lvov Sandomierz Operation, upon instructions of the commander of the First Ukrainian Front, Mar SU I. S. Konev, the front reserves and major air forces were involved in defeating the counterstrike grouping. In the aim of ensuring the development of the offensive, from the morning of 16 July, the main forces of the 3d Guards Tank Army were committed to battle and on 17 July the 4th Tank Army through the narrow Koltov Corridor.

In the East Prussian Operation, in order to prevent the further advance of the enemy counterstrike grouping, the commander of the Second Belorussian Front, Mar SU K. K. Rokossovskiy, strengthened the 48th Army with the VIII Guards Tank Corps. The 5th Guards Tank Army and the VIII Mechanized Corps were deployed with their front facing east. The III Guards Cavalry Corps with its main forces was to make a flanking strike. A rifle corps from the 49th Army was turned over from the front's reserve to the 48th Army.⁴ By a forced march re-located into the area of the 48th Army were: the 27th Antitank Artillery Brigade from the front's reserve, the 4th Brigade from the 49th Army and the 44th Brigade from the 3d Army. In addition, the 48th Army already had the 5th and 13th iptabr [antitank artillery brigade] and the 220th Guards iptap [anti-tank artillery regiment]. As a total they had 380 guns. The 48th Army was also reinforced by units of the 15th Artillery Breakthrough Division, the 31st Guards minbr [mortar brigade], the 19th minbr, the 2d Cavalry Brigade, the 6th, 77th and 84th Rocket Launcher Regiments.⁵

In the Budapest Operation of 1945, for stabilizing the situation of our troops in the area of the breakthrough by the enemy counterstrike grouping to the south of Szekesfehervar, by an order of the commander of the Third Ukrainian Front, Mar SU F. I. Tolbukhin, the 4th Guards Army was reinforced by a rifle corps from the front's reserve, by cavalry and mechanized corps and a rifle division turned over from the Second Ukrainian Front. Its right flank area was turned over to the 46th Army. Troops from the 57th Army were moved up into the area between Sarviz Canal and Lake Balaton. In order to prevent the further advance of enemy tanks, during the period from 2 through 4 January 1945, 28 artillery regiments of the RVGK [Reserve Supreme High Command] (including 8 heavy ones), the artillery of 5 rifle divisions, a cavalry corps and 2 antiaircraft regiments were concentrated in the area of Bicske in the zone of the XXXI Guards Rifle Corps some 25 km wide. This increased the overall number of guns in the corps' area by 5-6-fold. Of the arriving artillery, 464 guns were moved up for direct laying, including all the battalion and regimental artillery, 50 percent of the long-range artillery, 30-40 percent of the howitzer artillery regiments and 20 percent of the cannon artillery regiments of the RVGK.⁶

In a number of instances the bold maneuvering of the front's troops to the threatened sector and their decisive actions checked the counterstrike undertaken by the enemy. Thus, when the Soviet troops reached the Oder, there was a much greater threat of a counterstrike by the Nazi troops from the north. The commander of the First Belorussian Front, Mar SU G. K. Zhukov, on 1 February 1945 turned the 2d Guards Tank Army to fight in this sector and on the next day the 1st Guards Tank Army. As a result of the maneuver executed on 3 February the Pomeranian enemy grouping was opposed by four all-arms armies, two tank armies and a cavalry corps. In repelling numerous enemy attacks in this sector, the front's troops continued to move north.⁷

The defeat of the enemy counterstrike groupings was achieved by coordinated actions of the field forces and formations of the various Armed Services and branches of troops. This required precise organization of their cooperation. Under the conditions of limited time this was ordinarily organized by issuing the appropriate instructions to the immediate executors. The scope of the instructions on cooperation and the degree of detailing of the individual questions depended completely upon the developing situation, the men and weapons to be employed and the chosen method of action. In all instances, in organizing cooperation basic attention was given to achieving a combination of fire, troop attack and troop maneuvering. A strict procedure was established for employing the diverse resources considering the sequence of making the strikes against the advancing grouping and ensuring the joint carrying out of the basic tasks of defeating it.

In organizing the repelling of a counterstrike by large enemy groupings, the command of the fronts devoted particular attention to the most efficient employment of aviation, artillery and armored troops. In the aim of sharply reducing the rate of advance of the counterstrike groupings and holding up their deployment, aviation and long-range artillery made strikes against their concentration areas and against moving-up columns in narrows, they destroyed road junctions, bridges and crossings over water obstacles. With the start of the counterstrikes and in the course of repelling them, the aviation and artillery destroyed enemy tanks, artillery and personnel, they sealed off the combat areas from the arrival of reserves and subsequently actively supported the actions of the troops to complete the defeat of the counterstrike groupings.

In repelling a counterstrike in the Zhitomir-Berdichev Operation, for example, the formations of the 2d Air Army made massed strikes against the enemy tank groupings and destroyed its aviation in the air. They made 4,200 aircraft sorties, including 2,500 against the tank units.⁸ In the Budapest Operation, a portion of the aviation from the 5th Air Army of the Second Ukrainian Front was switched to support the troops of the Third Ukrainian Front which were repelling the enemy counterstrike on Budapest. On 22 January, the aviation of the air armies of both fronts made 1,034 aircraft sorties. During the most difficult moment, when the enemy had breached the front of the 4th Guards Army and a portion of its formations had been cut off from the rear, the air transports made over 500 aircraft sorties for supplying the troops with ammunition.⁹

The tank and mechanized formations, in operating in a majority of instances ahead of the main troop groupings of the first operational echelon and a significant distance away from them, were the first to engage the enemy counterstrike

groupings, they split them up and together with the arriving all-arms formations completed the rout. Thus, when the Nazi troops had succeeded in developing the attack on Bogodukhov and during 2 days, 16 and 17 August, had pushed back the battle-weakened formations of the 1st Tank Army and 6th Guards Army, upon instructions of Headquarters the 5th Guards Tank Army was moved up to the threatened sector. In the course of fierce battles with air support the enemy counterstrike was checked.¹⁰

In the course of the war, the role played by engineer troops grew in carrying out the missions of repelling enemy counterstrikes. In the East Prussian Operation, for example, in repelling a counterstrike the mobile obstacle building detachments in the threatened sectors laid minefields and electrified obstacles, they prepared bridges for demolition and in a number of sectors of the internal encirclement perimeter provided fire cover for the obstacles because of the insufficient troop density. As a total over 20,000 antitank mines and almost 27 km of electrified obstacles were set out.¹¹

The large amount of tasks to be carried out and the shortage of time to organize combat in repelling the enemy counterstrikes necessitated the centralizing of troop command. Here the work methods of the commanders and the staffs depended upon the specific situation. Missions for subordinate field forces were given in the form of brief orders or combat instructions. Usually these were transmitted by telephone, telegraph and radio. Only the most important of these were duplicated by written documents which were delivered by liaison officers. More often than usual there were direct conversations between the commander, the chief of staff and the commanders of the branches of troops of the front with subordinates. Staff officers from the front were sent to the staffs of the armies which were to repel the counterstrikes. With an acute complicating of the situation, the front commander could personally contact the army commanders. Usually, he drove out to the sector of the enemy counterstrike and in a number of instances established an auxiliary command post of the front in this sector.¹²

The command of the fronts gave great importance to selecting the most effective methods of repelling counterstrikes by large enemy groupings. Here the determining factors were primarily the strength of the enemy counterstrike groupings, the nature of their actions, the operational situation and position of the advancing troops of the fronts as well as the terrain features and the time available for the command. Here the interests of achieving the goals of the offensive operations necessitated the use of those methods of repelling the counterstrikes which would most ensure not only the defeat of the counterstrike groupings but also the successful development of the offensive in depth.

Certainly the methods of repelling the enemy counterstrikes in the course of the war were constantly improved in line with the occurring quantitative and qualitative changes in weapons and combat equipment, because of the increased fire and striking power of the troops and their greater maneuverability.

As experience showed, in repelling counterstrikes by large enemy groupings, the advancing troops of the fronts in a number of operations were forced temporarily to go over to the defensive.

In operations of the first period of the war, the repelling of counterstrikes in these instances was usually carried out by first echelon troops from the lines achieved in the course of the offensive. Here the second echelon formations, as a rule, were incorporated in the first echelon for augmenting its battle formations and raising the operational density of the troops on the threatened sectors. For example, enemy counterstrikes were repelled in this manner at Moscow in the area of Yukhnov, on the Vyazma sector in 1941 and at Kharkov in 1942.

In the subsequent periods, great attention began to be given to making air strikes against the enemy counterstrike groupings during the period of their moving up and deployment and also to the covert concentration on the threatened sectors of the men and weapons needed for successfully repelling the enemy counterstrikes and completing the defeat of its assault groupings. For example, having discovered the regrouping of the Nazi tank formations from the area of Vinnitsa and Uman, the command of the First and Second Ukrainian Fronts took a decision to quickly establish a strong external perimeter of encirclement capable of checking the advance of the large enemy grouping. The aviation of the fronts during the period from 29 January through 3 February 1944 made 2,800 combat sorties.¹³

In the event of a temporary going over to the defensive on the threatened sectors, reserves of various types were moved up, the most important lines and areas were prepared in engineering terms for the defensive, obstacles were built, the fire plan was organized and shelters were built for the troops. For example, in the Belgorod-Kharkov Operation of 1943, for repelling a counterstrike by a large grouping in the area of Bogodukhov, the 5th and 6th Guards Armies of the Voronezh Front quickly organized a strong defense. A broad network of tank ambushes was organized to a depth of 2-3 km; mixed minefields were set on the likely tank approaches; tank brigades were positioned in the reserve behind the rifle formations for counterattacking the enemy units which had broken through or for destroying them by fire from a halt from previously prepared lines.

In a number of offensive operations, the counterstrikes by large enemy groupings were repelled by combining defensive actions by a portion of the forces ahead of the front of the counterstrike grouping with the making of attacks on its flanks or by continuing the offensive on adjacent sectors. For example, on 5 February 1942, the Nazi troops made a counterstrike from the area to the south of Rzhev in the aim of cutting the lines of communications of the 39th and 29th Armies and a cavalry corps. In order to check the enemy's plans, the commander of the Kalinin Front ordered the 3d and 4th Assault Armies to initiate an energetic offensive on the Vitebsk and Smolensk sectors and to come out deep in the rear of the Army Group Center. In the Kiev Operation, the armies of the center and the left wing of the First Ukrainian Front from 13 November 1943 were conducting defensive operations in the aim of repelling enemy counterstrikes in the areas of Zhitomir, Fastov and Brusilov while the 60th and 13th Armies continued to develop the offensive on the Ovruch and Korosten sectors.

The temporary going over of the advancing troops to the defensive in the sector of the counterstrike by the main enemy forces most often occurred in those instances when the Nazis had succeeded in anticipating them in deployment and

seizing initiative or had been able to establish predominant superiority in men and weapons. Such a method of action made it possible initially to grind down the counterstrike grouping, to cause it significant losses and with the committing of the arriving reserves to battle, to complete its defeat. A significant portion of the forces also remained for maneuvering in the flank and rear of the counterstrike grouping or for developing the offensive on other sectors.

The development of an offensive on other sectors by the troops of a front created a threat to the flank or rear of the enemy grouping making the counterstrike and forced the Nazi Command to abandon the continuing of active operations, to go over to the defensive or begin to pull back its troops. In particular, this was the case at Akhtyrka in August 1943. The advancing troops on the right wing of the Voronezh Front (the 40th and 47th Armies) on 20 August deeply enveloped the left flank of the grouping which had made a counterstrike and as a result of this the Wehrmacht Command was forced to initially issue orders to going over to the defensive and then to retreat to the southwest.

During the offensive operations in the concluding period of the war, in repelling enemy counterstrikes, in certain instances an encounter attack was made by the first echelon formations with the subsequent increasing of their effort by committing the second echelons and reserves. In those instances when the advancing troops held a good enveloping position, attacks were made against one or both flanks of the counterstrike grouping. Thus, in the course of the 1944 Belorussian Operation, in the zone of the 5th Army to the southeast of Kaunas, the Nazi troops made a counterstrike with the forces of four divisions. After heavy air and artillery attacks the rifle and tank formations made an encounter attack against them. Here a portion of the rifle divisions reinforced by anti-tank brigades tied down the counterstrike grouping from the front while the main forces of the army along with the tank formations with air support attacked it in the flank. After stubborn 3-day battles, the basic forces of the enemy counterstrike grouping, in suffering heavy losses, were forced to retreat.

When the advancing troops did not have sufficient time to maneuver in the aim of coming out on the flanks of the enemy grouping, frontal attacks were made. Thus was defeated the Nazi grouping which in August 1944 tried to counterstrike from the area of Mielec toward Baranow and cut off the formations of the First Ukrainian Front which were on the Sandomierz bridgehead.

As the experience of the war has shown, the repelling of enemy counterstrikes by making encounter attacks by the advancing troops was the most effective method making it possible not only to fight successfully against the counterstrike grouping but also to ensure the development of the operation without reducing the rate of advance. However, such a method was possible only in those instances when the troops fighting in the sector of the counterstrike possessed the necessary resources for this, had idle second echelons and reserves or could be promptly reinforced by resources shifted from other, less important sectors.

Thus, the experience of the Great Patriotic War shows that the repelling of counterstrikes of large enemy groupings was one of the important tasks on the way to achieving the end goals of the front-level offensive operations. The

successful carrying out of this had an immediate impact on the development of the offensive at a rapid rate and to a great depth. In line with this the measures to repel such counterstrikes were organized in a majority of instances on the basis of the instructions of Hq SHC regardless of the fact that the resources of one of the fronts were usually involved in carrying out this mission in the course of each operation.

In carrying out this mission of great importance was the prompt detection of the moving up of reserves by the Nazi Command and the concentrating of these in the sectors of the forthcoming operations. This required the skillful organization and conduct of continuous reconnaissance of all types from the start to the end of the operation.

An important factor which in many ways determined the success in checking the enemy's plans was the correct choice by the command of the fronts and armies of the methods of repelling the enemy counterstrikes and which most conformed to the specific situation, the existing balance of forces and the actual operational position of the advancing troops.

Attention should also be given to the experience of concentrating significant resources in the sectors of the Nazi counterstrikes by maneuvering these resources from in depth and from other sectors of the front. By bold maneuvering the Soviet Command succeeded in a short period of time in altering the balance of forces in its favor, creating the necessary superiority over the enemy and dealing a decisive defeat to its counterstrike groupings. Here the use of aviation, artillery and armored troops assumed crucial significance.

However, it must be considered that the changes which have occurred in military affairs in the postwar period have introduced new elements in the solution to this question. For example, the NATO Command feels that the use of new, more destructive weapons than in the previous war, in being combined with increased strike force, high troop maneuverability and the presence of strong reserves, makes it possible for the defending troops to make stronger counterstrikes than in the past. As a result of these, it is possible not only to check the commenced offensive but also create conditions for subsequently going over to a counteroffensive without any pause. It is also planned to attack the second echelons and reserves of the advancing troops even before they have been committed to battle. Under these conditions the greatest importance is assumed not only and not so much by the repelling of the counterstrikes, as was the case in the last war, but chiefly their checking by making strong anticipatory attacks against the counterstrike groupings in the course of their moving up and concentration and developing a rapid offensive by the troops in depth. From the strategic and operational leadership elements this requires more profound foresight, the preliminary planning and conducting of measures to check the counterstrikes being prepared within the shortest time.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], vol 10, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1979, p 170.

- ² Ibid., vol 7, 1976, p 174.
- ³ Ibid., p 176.
- ⁴ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 16a, inv. 956, file 19, sheet 36.
- ⁵ "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [The Soviet Artillery in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p 607.
- ⁶ Ibid., p 564.
- ⁷ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", vol 10, p 83.
- ⁸ "Sovetskiye Voenno-Vozdushnyye Sily v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945" [The Soviet Air Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 246.
- ⁹ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", vol 10, pp 171-172.
- ¹⁰ Ibid., vol 7, p 176.
- ¹¹ "Inzhenernyy voyska Sovetskoy Armii v vazhneyshikh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Engineer Troops of the Soviet Army in the Major Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 226.
- ¹² V. A. Maramzin, "Istoriya razvitiya metodov upravleniya voyskami v operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [The History of the Developments of the Methods of Troop Control in the Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Izd. Voennoy akademii General'nogo shtaba, 1976, pp 159-160.
- ¹³ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy...", vol 8, 1977, p 72.

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LOGISTICAL REORGANIZATION AT START OF WORLD WAR II REVIEWED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 32-38

[Article by Col (Ret) S. Skryabin and Col (Ret) N. Medvedev: "On the Rear Services of the Fronts at the Outset of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] In the battles on the Khalkhin-Gol River and in the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940, the Soviet troops acquired some experience in organizing rear troop support. On the basis of this the draft Rear Services Manual of the Red Army was worked out in two parts (1941). The concept of the rear services of a front included the front's units and facilities which were to provide transport, evacuation and repair as well as the rear services area where these units and facilities were located and operated. The front's rear services were entrusted with the task of preparing the necessary materiel for conducting the operations and promptly supplying them to the armies.

According to the prewar views, the scheme for supplying the fronts with materiel was as follows. The General Staff determined the demand of the front for materiel and issued directives to its subordinate supply services which dispatched everything as they were instructed while the VOSO [Military Communications] bodies which were in charge of all types of transport (including automotive, rail, water and air) delivered everything necessary to the fronts. The General Staff established the consumption rates for materiel for the fronts and the procedure for echeloning the supplies.

On the eve of the war, a decision was taken to combine the activities of the central bodies responsible for rear service questions. The Deputy People's Commissar of Defense and Chief of the General Staff, Army Gen G. K. Zhukov was made responsible for directing the work of three directorates: the organization of rear services¹ and supply, military communications and fuel supply. Leadership over the work of the Main Intendant, sanitary and veterinary directorates as well as the Materiel Section was entrusted to the Deputy People's Commissar of Defense, Mar SU S. M. Budennyi.² A schematic diagram of the control and command of the rear services in the Center, according to the prewar views, is shown in Figure 1. The Artillery Supply Service of the Main Artillery Directorate (GAU) was in charge of questions of supplying the fronts with weapons and ammunition.

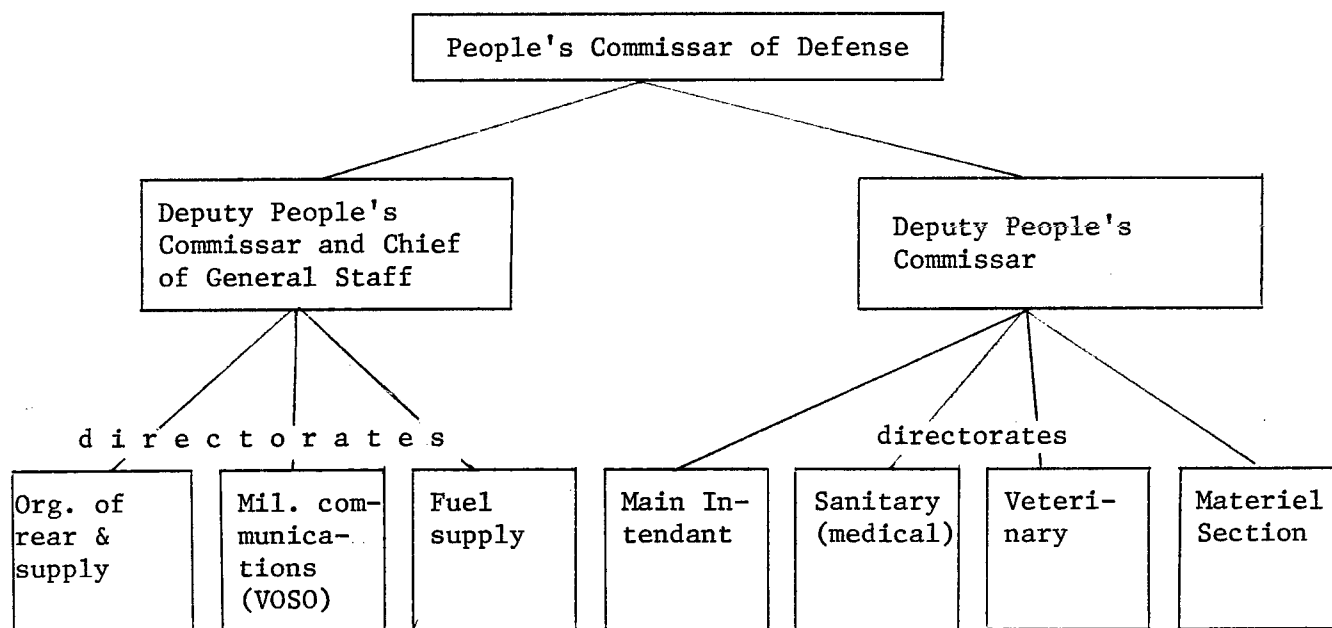


Fig. 1. Schematic Diagram of Command and Control of Rear Services of Center at Start of Great Patriotic War

As for the questions of controlling the rear services and coordinating the activities of the supply services, this was entrusted to the all-arms staffs. Incorporated in them were five sections headed by a deputy chief of the front (army) staff for the rear services.³

The appropriate chiefs of the branches of troops and services directly under the commander of the front were responsible for supplying the troops with such materiel as artillery, engineer, quartermaster, armored vehicle, medical and veterinary supplies, antichemical warfare equipment, means of communications, fuels and lubricants.

In accord with the prewar views, it was felt that the main forces would be engaged approximately several days after the outbreak of the war. The mobilizational deployment of the operational rear services was also planned proceeding from this. In peacetime only a limited number of rear units and facilities were kept in the districts as required for supporting the daily activities of the troops and for deploying the front's rear services at the times set by the mobilization plans. With the outbreak of a war, the first to be mobilized were the rear units and facilities of the cover armies for the border military districts and then the front rear services.

It was assumed that at the outset of the war, a front would have a ready-to-go base for logistic support and service of the troops including railroads, waterways, highways and air routes, local and specially established supplies, dumps, production enterprises, repair shops, medical and veterinary facilities. The rear units and facilities of the fronts and armies were to be deployed on the basis of these permanent district rear units and facilities.⁴

On the eve of the war the basic mobilizational supplies were concentrated close to the frontier in the border districts. The amount of supplies of the basic types kept in the front dumps should ensure at least a month's requirements of the troops with up to ten units of fire for ammunition, up to ten fuelings and 30 days of rations of food and fodder. Such supplies were established proceeding from the view that in the course of the commenced war (offensive operations) the front's rear services should promptly establish the necessary supplies and deliver them to the army regulating stations.⁵ The chiefs of the supply services took every measure to promptly carry out the instructions of the General Staff to establish necessary supplies in the border districts.

The Red Army Fuel Supply Directorate by the start of the war did not have its own dumps for motor fuel and stored aviation gasoline at just one dump of the NKO [People's Commissariat of Defense]. Fuel was stored at district dumps and oil depots of Glavneftesbyt [Main Administration for Petroleum Marketing] on contractual bases.⁶

The mobilization supplies of ammunition in the western border districts were kept on territory that was 50-700 km from the states frontier. Around a quarter of these supplies was located close to the frontier. The troops had an immediate ammunition supply of from 1.25 (rifle division) to 3.0 (tank division) units of fire of shells and mortar ammunition.⁷

The mobilization plans envisaged that with the outbreak of combat the troops in the border military districts (fronts) should receive ammunition from the district artillery dumps from supplies established here prior to the war. With the going over to a state of war, the GAU was to immediately begin to deliver ammunition from the central dumps to the head army artillery dumps which were to be mobilized and organized from the district artillery dumps from their personnel and located in the areas of the army supply stations. With the deployment of the army head artillery dumps it was assumed that the troops would be supplied with ammunition from these dumps.

The sudden, treacherous attack by Nazi Germany on the Soviet Union overturned the plans for conducting combat in the initial period of the war. The troops of the border military districts (fronts) under the blows of the superior enemy forces in heavy fighting were forced to retreat into the interior of the nation.

A major task for the rear services of the fronts in this situation was to supply the troops with all essential materiel. At the same time, it was essential in a short period of time to convert the rear units and facilities existing at the front to a wartime TOE as well as organize a large number of new ones.

The mobilizing, concentration and deployment of the front and army rear services had to be done in an extremely difficult situation. Particularly major difficulties for the operation of the rear services of the fronts developed after the enemy had occupied the areas which had been designated for the deployment of the operational rear services and where the front and army rear units and facilities were to be organized from local resources. Because of this, the fronts, armies and even certain formations were fighting having a very limited number of motor transport, medical and other rear units and facilities.

Lacking the necessary amount of motor transport, with disrupted command and the lack of dependable communications with the troops, the rear bodies of the fronts (armies) were unable to successfully carry out their tasks. Logistical support for the fighting units and formations was provided with great interruptions.⁸ Regardless of the presence of large supplies of ammunition, fuel, food and other materiel directly in the troops and in the territory of the border military districts (fronts), in many instances these were not employed. A significant portion of the mobilization supplies which by the start of the war had been concentrated in the territory of the western districts was captured or destroyed by the enemy with the forced retreat of the Soviet troops. The fronts were deprived of significant supplies of fuel, ammunition, weapons, clothing, medical supplies and other types of materiel. Over several days of continuous hard fighting in the border engagements the troops quickly expended their available mobilization and even the emergency supplies of ammunition, fuels, lubricants and food.

Due to the disruption of the supply of materiel for the troops, the counterstrikes by Soviet forces were often thwarted. Thus, in the counterstrike by the Western Front on 23-24 June against the Suwalki enemy grouping in the area of Grodno, at the very peak of the intense battles the VI and XI Mechanized Corps were left without fuel and ammunition.⁹

By 26 June, in the 3d and 10th Armies, as throughout the Western Front, there was an acute shortage of ammunition, fuels, lubricants and food.¹⁰

The Command of the Southwestern Front had also not been able to organize continuous supply of ammunition and fuel for the troops. Mar SU K. K. Rokossovskiy has very aptly recalled the difficulties which the troops encountered during the first days of the war. At that time he was in command of the IX Mechanized Corps: "All preparations were carried out at a rapid pace, but calmly and in a planned manner. Each man knew his place and precisely performed his duties. The difficulties were only with logistical support. The number of motor vehicles was insignificant. Fuel was lacking. There was a limited amount of ammunition. There was no time to wait until those above would indicate what was to be obtained and where. Not far off were the central ammunition dumps and the garrison motor vehicle fleet. I ordered the dumps to be opened. The resistance of the quartermasters had to be overcome by the appropriate persuasion and receipts."¹¹

In order to ease the difficult situation of the retreating troops, the Chief Quartermaster of the Red Army, Lt Gen Intend Serv A. V. Khrulev immediately sent his representatives to the staffs of the fronts for providing the necessary aid to the rear bodies and also for taking measures to evacuate the quartermaster supplies.

In line with the undermanning of the motor transport subunits in the troops, the occupying of troop transport with the moving of mobile supplies in the course of the defensive operations underway and the retreat of our troops, the materiel was more often delivered to the divisions by equipment of the armies, fronts and motor columns of Hq SHC. It became a wide practice of sending the troop motor transport for materiel to the army, front and even nearest central NKO dumps.¹²

The supply directorates of the NKO in the initial period of the war carried out enormous work for the rear support of the troops of the fronts and they upon request of the commands of the fronts and the armies organized their supply directly from the central dumps, bypassing the front and often the army level and widely employing rail and sometimes motor transport of the national economic enterprises.

The rear bodies of the fronts during the initial period of the war often were out of touch with the Center. And the fronts, regardless of a number of directive instructions from the General Staff and the main supply directorates on the procedure for supplying the operational army, more and more often sent their representatives to the different supply bodies of the Center with demands and requests to release various property. This to a definite degree disrupted the work of the central supply bodies.

On the basis of the experience of the initial period of the war, a conclusion was drawn on an urgent need to reorganize the rear command bodies both at the Center as well as on the fronts and in the armies.

At the end of July, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I. V. Stalin ordered the Deputy People's Commissar for Defense and Chief Quartermaster of the Red Army, Gen A. V. Khrulev,¹³ to draw up proposals on establishing independent bodies for the command of the Red Army rear services and which would be directly in charge of the rear support of the troops.

The draft "Diagram for the Organization of the Red Army Rear Services" was worked out by the Chief Quartermaster Directorate and on 27 July approved by the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, A. I. Mikoyan, who was then concerned with supply questions for the Soviet Army. On the following day, this plan was reported to the Supreme Commander-in-Chief I. V. Stalin and approved by him.¹⁴ Gen A. V. Khrulev was appointed the chief of the Red Army Rear Services. The chief of the rear services was entrusted with the functions of organizing the rear services, delivering all types of supplies to the front, as well as evacuating sick, wounded and military property.¹⁵

On 1 August 1941, the People's Commissar of Defense I. V. Stalin signed the order "On Organizing the Main Directorate of the Red Army Rear Services. On Organizing the Rear Service Directorates of the Fronts and Armies. The Regulation on Directorates." Considering the importance of the order it was telegraphed to the operational army.¹⁶ On the front a rear services directorate was established with the front's rear service chief with the following sections: planning-organizational, military communications, road service and inspectorate of the front rear services chief. The personnel of the sections for the organization of the rear services and supply, military communications and the road service of the front's staff set to organizing the directorate. A schematic diagram for the control and command of the Center's rear services after their reorganization is shown in Figure 2.

The services for supplying the troops with combat and technical equipment were not put under the chief of the Red Army Rear Services. These remained under the chiefs of the corresponding branches of troops. But the delivery of the equipment of these services to the troops was planned by the rear bodies which were in charge of all transport.

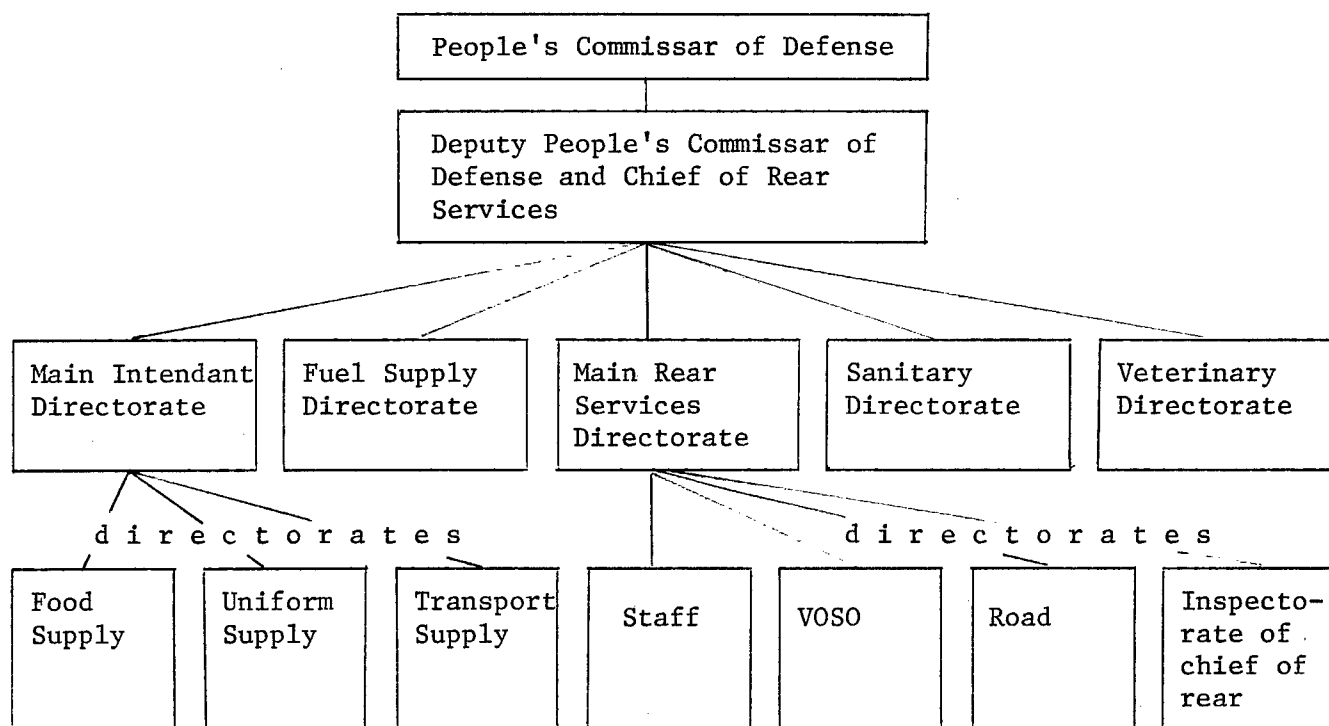


Fig. 2. Schematic Diagram for Command and Control of Rear Services of Center after Their Reorganization in Aug 1941

The structure of the rear bodies of the fronts was set following the same plan. The front's rear services chief was the deputy commander of the front. He was subordinate to the front's commander and simultaneously to the chief of the Red Army Rear Services.

Gens V. K. Mordvinov, M. G. Snegov, V. N. Kurdyumov, M. S. Khozin, I. G. Sovetnikov, M. A. Reyter and I. K. Smirnov were appointed to the positions of front rear services chiefs. Just before all of them assembled in the office of I. V. Stalin. The Supreme Commander-in-Chief familiarized those present with the situation and emphasized the exceptional difficulties in delivering materiel to the troops and evacuating the wounded. "The war," he said, "requires iron order in troop supply. This order should be implanted by the firm hand of the rear services chiefs of the fronts and armies. You must be dictators in the rear area of your fronts and each of you must learn this well."¹⁷

By the NKO Order of 7 August 1941, the troops were prohibited from sending their representatives to the Center without a summons while the central supply directorates were required to strictly follow the established procedure of supplying the troops through the front according to the plans approved by the chiefs of the main directorates. Unplanned demands could be satisfied only after varification by the chiefs of the main directorates as to its urgency and necessity.

The large number of permanent dumps, bases and repair shops in the fronts and armies impeded the mobility and maneuverability of the rear and greatly hindered their control. For example, in August 1941, the Southwestern Front had more than 100 different and basically permanent dumps and each of its armies had up to 25. For this reason one of the major tasks was to lighten up the operational rear services and ensure their better mobility.

Upon the proposal of the chief of the Red Army Rear Services, by the order of the NKO many permanent rear units and facilities were abolished. For improving the mobility and maneuverability of the operational rear, on the fronts mobile front dumps were organized for the basic types of materiel (artillery, armored vehicle, quartermaster and military-technical supplies as well as fuel and lubricants) and these were located in the area of the front's regulating stations. In the armies army depots were organized consisting of 7-8 field dumps instead of 24-25.¹⁸

The experience of the rear support of the troops in the initial period of the Great Patriotic War showed that the front rear services should be mobile and maneuverable. For the effective control of the rear services it was essential to have independent command bodies both at the Center and in the field. Command and control over all the rear services should be centralized.

The establishing of independent rear service command bodies and the concentrating in the hands of the rear services chiefs the planning, organizing of supply and command of the rear services as well as transport and evacuation made it possible to more effectively resolve many questions of rear service operations, to systematize the supply of materiel for the troops, to rationally utilize all types of transport and institute firm military order in the rear areas. The newly established structure of the Soviet Army Rear Services proved fully effective in the subsequent operations of the Great Patriotic War.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ By the organization of rear services we understand the designating of rear areas, the locating of rear units and facilities, the preparation and utilization of lines of communications.
- ² "Tyl Sovetskoy Armii" [The Soviet Army Rear Services], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 90.
- ³ "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh Sil v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [The Rear Services of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1977, p 46.
- ⁴ "Tyl Sovetskoy Armii," p 84.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid., p 91.
- ⁷ "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", p 58.

- ⁸ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [The History of World War II of 1939-1945], vol 4, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, pp 49, 50.
- ⁹ Ibid., p 40.
- ¹⁰ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 208, inv. 3038, file 15, sheet 12.
- ¹¹ K. K. Rokossovskiy, "Soldatskiy dolg" [A Soldier's Duty], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, pp 11-12.
- ¹² "Tyl Sovetskoy Armii," p 104.
- ¹³ By the Decree of the USSR Council of People's Commissars of 20 July 1941, the Chief Quartermaster of the Red Army, Lt Gen Intend Serv A. V. Khrulev, was appointed the deputy people's commissar of defense.
- ¹⁴ TsAMO, folio 67, inv. 12018, file 147, sheets 1-10.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., inv. 5890, file 2, sheet 14.
- ¹⁶ Ibid., folio 2, inv. 795437, file 5, sheets 545-547.
- ¹⁷ "Tyl Sovetskikh Vooruzhennykh...", p 78.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., p 82.

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STRATEGIC DEPLOYMENT OF BELLIGERENTS IN WORLD WAR II EXAMINED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 39-45

[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Professor, Maj Gen A. Zaporozhchenko and Col V. Galitskiy: "On the Question of the Strategic Deployment of Armed Forces of the Basic Capitalist States in World War II"]

[Text] The problem of the strategic deployment of armed forces arose with the appearance of mass armies in the 1860's and 1870's. In World War I, the strategic deployment of armed forces was carried out after the declaration of war by mobilizing and concentrating the troops in the theaters of war actually without hindrance from the enemy. The declaration of mobilization was preceded by a covert preparatory period and a brief period of outright preparations for war.

By the start of World War II, as a consequence of the improvement in the mobilization system as well as the increase in the technical equipping, the greater strike force and maneuverability of the armed forces, an opportunity arose to shorten the time of their strategic deployment. The aggressive states, in the aims of achieving surprise attack, began to carry out the basic deployment measures even in peacetime, before the start of the war. In order to conceal preparations for war and to confuse the enemy, all measures were carried out in secret, over an extended time and, as a rule, under the pretext of strengthening the defenses of their own state frontiers.

These trends in strategic deployment of the armed forces were expressed most completely in the military theoretical views, mobilization plans and practical measures of Nazi Germany.

By 1939, Germany had completed the organizing of a mass peacetime army, having increased the number of divisions from 10 in 1926 up to 41 in 1936. In accord with mobilization plan of 1939-1940, the total number of divisions was to be increased to 103.¹ Here the mobile troops and infantry divisions which were to be located predominantly in the border zone by the start of the war could be brought up to full strength in several hours by drawing on local resources. The organizing of new infantry divisions was carried out at different times from 1.5 to 6 days. The flight units of the Air Forces and the Navy ships were deployed ahead of time, in peacetime. They received their lacking personnel with the declaration of mobilization.

The acceleration and concealment of deployment were achieved by dividing the mobilization areas along territorial lines, by the early concentrating of militarily trained reserves and the necessary material supplies in them, by the maximum shortening of the mobilization movements, by carrying out mobilization measures under the guise of exercises, maneuvers and so forth. Thus, during 1938, under the pretext of calling up reservists for "training assemblies and maneuvers" 18 new divisions and 5 corps headquarters were organized in Germany.

For increasing the strength of the armed forces, Germany utilized also such actions as the "Anschluss" with Austria as a result of which the Austrian Army was incorporated in the Wehrmacht. There was also the annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938 and the occupation of Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1939.

The concentration and operational deployment of the armed forces of Nazi Germany were carried out ahead of time against each of the enemies in accord with the "Blitzkrieg" concept which envisaged their successive defeat in rapid campaigns. Here the basic forces were concentrated in the first strategic echelon in the aim of making a powerful initial surprise attack. Thus, in preparing for the attack on Poland, the Nazi troops began to concentrate and deploy 2 months prior to the start of the war and carried this out under the guise of maneuvers, exercises and engineer work on the frontier; in East Prussia under the pretext of preparing to celebrate the victory of the German troops at Tanenberg. In parallel the motorized and tank formations were concentrated in the central regions of Germany. They moved up to the jump-off areas during the last days before the outbreak of war. Simultaneously on the frontier with France, a cover army was deployed under the pretext of building defensive works. Mobilization was to be announced on the day preceding the attack. The Directive of the German Supreme Command "On the Unified Preparations of the Armed Forces for War" issued on 3 April 1939 stated: "The mission of the German Armed Forces is to destroy the Polish Armed Forces. For this it is essential to endeavor and prepare for a surprise attack. An order will be given on carrying out a secret or overt general mobilization on the day of the offensive at the last possible moment.... The planning of military preparations should be carried out in such a manner so that the operation could be carried out at any time starting on 1 September 1939."²

Under these conditions important significance was given to the range of pre-mobilization measures carried out ahead of time in the threatened period as well as the covert readying of the maximum number of troops assigned to conduct the first operations. The premobilization measures throughout the nation started on 18 August 1939, that is, a week before the initially designated date of the war while in East Prussia, these were conducted from the start of July. As a result, even before the start of the general mobilization, an "invasion army" had been organized consisting of 37 formations. This was 35 percent of the entire strength of the wartime ground forces. By covert deployment the army had been brought to a state where the general mobilization announced the day before the planned start of the war (25 August) actually came down to concluding the previously commenced measures.

By 1 September, 43 formations of the 58 envisaged in the plan had been deployed, virtually all the main forces of the invasion troops.

In preparing to invade France, the initial grouping was organized over more than 8 months by the successive implementation of measures in four stages: in the first the cover troops were concentrated and deployed, in the second the troops were regrouped from the Eastern (Polish) Front to the West, in the third in the course of an additional mobilization a troop grouping was established on a spurious sector opposite Belgium and in the fourth, concluding stage, a portion of this grouping was shifted to the area of the Ardennes, the sector of the main attack. As a total, by the beginning of the offensive on the Western Front the strategic grouping of Nazi troops included 136 divisions, including 10 tank and 7 motorized.

The strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of Germany and its allies in preparing for the attack on the Soviet Union had a number of particular features in comparison with the previous campaigns. In the first place, the concentrating of such an enormous mass of troops and equipment had not been carried out in any of the previously conducted campaigns. It was necessary to bring over 140 German divisions up to the Soviet frontier, to move up and deploy over 30 Romanian, Finnish and Hungarian formations, to relocate from West to East the aviation of three air fleets as well as deliver a large amount of equipment, weapons and material supplies.³

Secondly, the concentration of the Nazi troops opposite the Soviet Union was carried out under the conditions of the nonaggression treaty in effect between Germany and the USSR. For this reason for maintaining strictest secrecy about the measures being carried out, an extensive system of political, diplomatic and military disinformation was organized. The Special Directive on Deceiving the Enemy of 15 February 1941 stated that the strategic deployment of forces for Operation Barbarossa should be represented in the light of the greatest disinformation maneuver in the history of wars in the aim of diverting the attention from the final preparations for the invasion of England. Over the entire period of troop concentration, rail transport was to operate according to a peacetime schedule and only during the month prior to the attack would convert to a war-time schedule.

Thirdly, in carrying out the strategic deployment of armed forces along the Soviet frontiers, the German Command extensively used the enormous experience acquired by the command personnel, the staffs and the troops as well as by the military communications bodies in the area of conducting covert regroupings employing different types of transport.

In terms of the time and content of measures, the concentration and deployment process by the German troops can be arbitrarily divided into basic stages: the first (July 1940-January 1941) with the moving up of the cover echelon consisting of four divisions and its deployment on the territory of East Prussia, Poland, Northern Norway and Romania and the second (February 1941 until the beginning of the war with the USSR) with the direct strategic deployment.

The concluding stage in the strategic deployment was the covert moving up of the assault groupings to the jump-off areas for the offensive and this was carried out over several nights prior to the attack. The cover for the move-up was organized by the forces of reinforced battalions which had been moved up ahead of time to the frontier and these monitored the areas of the front assigned to the divisions prior to the approach of the main forces.

The relocating of aviation commenced in the last days of May and was ended by 18 June. Here the fighter and troop aviation was concentrated at airfields up to 40 km away from the frontier and bomber aviation was not more than 180 km.

The strategic deployment of the Japanese Army was carried out approximately according to the same system as for the German Armed Forces. However, this was done more gradually with a greater extension over time. The deployment of the Japanese Armed Forces was greatly aided by the armed conflicts which the Japanese military initiated started in 1931. The intensity of the measures was increased in line with the immediate preparations of Japan for a major war against the USSR and its imperialist competitors. Thus, the number of divisions in the ground army was increased from 24 in 1937 up to 50 divisions in 1940 while the number of air squadrons in the Air Forces rose from 70 in 1938 up to 106 in 1940.⁷

The basis for the strategic deployment of the Polish Army was the supposition that the war would commence in a classic manner, that is, by a declaration of war, the mobilizing of the armed forces, their deployment and then the transition to active fighting. The covert mobilization deployment which Poland commenced after the exacerbation of Polish-German relations in March 1939 was carried out on a limited scale and without sufficient decisiveness due to the fear of provoking a German attack. In following a defensive strategy, the Command of the Polish Armed Forces knowingly surrendered strategic initiative into the hands of the enemy. The final mobilization and operational deployment of the main forces of the Polish Army was made dependent on enemy actions, in deferring the carrying out of the final measures to the start of the war.

Under the influence of the anti-Soviet policy of its Western allies, regardless of the threat of Nazi aggression, the Polish reactionary government was preparing more for a war against the USSR than to repel the aggression of Nazi Germany. For this reason almost up to the very outset of the war more than one-half of the Polish Army continued to be stationed in the eastern regions of the country. The basic troop regroupings envisaged by the strategic deployment plan started only on 26 August while the order for the armies and operational groups of the first echelon to take up the jump-off areas and establish a defensive grouping to repel aggression was issued only on 30 August, that is, the day before the invasion of the Nazi troops. Here the Polish troops were deployed to a shallow depth and subsequently this provided an opportunity for the enemy to quickly overcome their resistance and develop the offensive into the interior of the nation.⁸

Due to the developing military-political conditions prior to World War II, there were certain particular features in the strategic deployment of the French Army. The "cover army" was mobilized by conducting two covert partial mobilizations which started in mid-August 1939. This army was assigned to conduct the first defensive operations and the "Phoney War" which started on 3 September made it possible for the French to complete their mobilization on a planned basis and to approximately double the size of the armed forces.

The strategic deployment of the French Army was based on the idea of an extended positional defense which relied on a system of permanent fortifications. The most probable direction of the enemy's main thrust was considered to be a strip

of terrain running across the Netherlands and Northern Belgium and here the French Command deployed the basic mass of the most battleworthy formations. The English Expeditionary Army was also deployed here.

A particular feature in the concentration of the French Army was the fact that on the Franco-German Frontier the cover troops and the main forces were deployed in the same areas and along the same lines from which they were to engage in defensive combat. On the Franco-Belgium Frontier, the Allied Troops were moved up only to the assembly areas and their direct deployment started with the invasion of Belgium and Dutch territory by the Nazi troops.

By the start of the German offensive in May 1940, the French Army consisting of 110 divisions was deployed in two groupings: opposite Germany or the North-eastern Front (85-86 divisions) and opposite Italy or the Southeastern Front (10 divisions) while the remainder were in the French colonial possessions. The experience of the initial operations showed that such a troop grouping did not correspond to the existing situation while the scattering of reserves greatly complicated their regrouping and utilization in the process of conducting the first defensive engagements.

The mobilization deployment of the English and U.S. armed forces was carried out under completely different conditions. Due to their particular geographic position, a surprise enemy invasion of their territory was excluded and because of this there was no need to keep large armed forces in peacetime. Moreover, the military doctrines and strategic plans of these states put the culminating point of strategic effort toward the end of the war. For this reason the carrying out of measures to deploy the armed forces was planned only after the start of a war. Both Great Britain and the United States were preparing primarily for a war at sea. Because of this, basic attention at the start of the war was concentrated on the deploying of their fleets and on shifting ground forces to areas of planned or expected combat operations.

The strategic deployment of the English Armed Forces was carried out under a difficult situation for Great Britain. The danger of an attack by Germany and Italy required the concentrating of the army and navy efforts primarily in Europe. At the same time, there was a potential threat to the English possessions by Japan in the Pacific Basin.

The general mobilization announced on 1 September 1939 was unprepared due to the absence of a material base for deploying new corps and armies and the lack of instructors for training the new recruits. Particularly great difficulties arose in solving the problem of the equipping of the new formations. Precisely they were the impeding factor in carrying out the plans adopted after the start of the war for deploying the ground forces. In particular, these envisaged that by the end of the second year of the war, that is, by September 1941, 55 divisions would be employed including 32 by the British Isles.⁹

The English Command at the end of August 1939 began to organize the Expeditionary Army and ferry it to the Continent. Simultaneously, the deployment of the home fleet began and, since its base areas were located in immediate proximity to the main bases, all the ships of the fleet by 31 August were at the wartime base areas or approaching them. The men and weapons of the English air defenses were brought to combat readiness in the aim of covering the basic installations.

In the Pacific Basin, due to the shortage of resources for defending their possessions, the English concentrated their basic efforts on depending key points such as Singapore and Manila and in covering the lines of communications running to these bases.

At the time war broke out in Europe, the United States was neutral. It was in no hurry to deploy its armed forces. With the strongest navy, it possessed just 3.5 land divisions and several air squadrons which were part of the Army. The creation of a land army and air force started after Nazi Germany had initiated the war in Europe.

Instead of the previous principle of manning the ground forces by a mixed regular and national guard system, the U.S. Congress, with the fall of France and the sharp deterioration in the situation of Great Britain, on 9 September 1940 adopted a law on universal military service while even before, in mid-1940, the National Guard had been incorporated in the regular army. By August 1941, the United States had 29 infantry divisions, 4 armored divisions and 2 cavalry divisions as well as tactical aviation numbering around 200 squadrons with up to 175,000 personnel. The regular army, the National Guard and the contingent which had been drafted into the army numbered around 1.6 million soldiers and officers.¹⁰

According to the estimates of the military leadership, the total size of the U.S. Army by 1 July 1943, that is, by the time the ground forces and Air Force would be ready for final, decisive combat, would be around 8.8 million men (approximately 215 divisions) with plans to ferry around 5 million men overseas.¹¹ Here the Army should consist predominantly of air, tank and motorized formations. These plans were used as the basis for the rapid deployment of the American Armed Forces, particularly after the U.S. entry into the war and the declaration of a general mobilization in December 1941.

In July 1941, an American group under the command of Gen MacArthur had been established in the Philippines. It was based on American troops reinforced by tanks, field and antiaircraft artillery, fighter and bomber aviation all of which had been brought in from the United States, as well as the Philippine Army mobilized for the period of the emergency. Subsequently, it was not possible to increase the force of this group since the six transports with equipment and weapons sent at the end of November and the beginning of December 1941 were unable to reach the Philippines while the transports planned for December were not dispatched.¹²

Thus, the experience of military operations in the Far East confirmed the advisability of the early carrying out of strategic deployment by the U.S. Armed Forces. However, while Japan had been able to mobilize fully, to concentrate and deploy its troops, aviation and naval forces in the sectors chosen for making the attacks, the United States and England were late in deployment and were poorly prepared even for conducting a strategic defense which was not envisaged by their war plans.

An analysis of the strategic deployment of the armed forces of Germany, Japan, Poland, France, England and the United States on the eve and at the start of World War II shows that its contents and methods as well as the sequence of

conducting the measures depended upon the political aims of the state in the war, the military-political situation, the composition and capabilities of the peacetime armed forces. Of definite influence were the military theoretical concepts underlying the plans for the war and initial operations, the remoteness of the countries from the theaters of war and the physicogeographic conditions of the latter.

The aggressive states--Germany and Japan--in the aims of achieving surprise carried out an early concealed deployment of their armed forces. All the basic measures related to mobilization, the concentration and deployment of the troops and naval forces were conducted in the prewar period. Here the troops were concentrated under the conditions of strictest concealment while their deployment and the setting up of the initial groupings for the offensive were carried out in a short time, directly prior to the start of combat. This provided an opportunity for the aggressors from the very outset of the war to conduct major strategic offensive operations with decisive goals.

Those countries which due to a number of reasons were forced to carry out the strategic deployment of their armed forces with the outbreak of military operations, as a rule, during the first days of the war were unable to successfully repel the offensive by superior enemy forces and parry the invasion of their territory by enemy troops. All of this greatly impeded the completion of strategic deployment in the course of the initial operations and in individual operations led to its failure.

The possibility of the failing of strategic deployment of armed forces by the making of deep surprise strikes by the probable enemy under present-day conditions has increased even more. In line with this, the role of reconnaissance has increased immeasurably and it must promptly provide warning about the aggressor's intentions. In addition, a greater role is also played by an effective cover on land, in the air and at sea.

The experience of World War II has shown the constant increase in the scale, volume, spatial scope and pace of carrying out the strategic deployment of the armed forces. Mobilization, the operational deployment of the troops in the theaters of war and the conduct of operations under certain conditions, in the opinion of Western specialists, can merge into one. For this reason the idea of the strategic deployment of the armed forces should stem from the overall concept of the first operations and the deployment of the men and weapons in a short period of time and ensure the high combat readiness of the groups established and their ability to immediately commence and conduct combat with decisive aims.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ B. Muller-Hillebrand, "Sukhoputnaya armiya Germanii 1933-1945 gg." [The German Land Army of 1933-1945], vol 1, Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1956, pp 16, 70, 80-81.
- ² K. Tippelskirch, "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny" [History of World War II], translated from the German, Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1956, p 21.

- ³ "Nachal'nyy period voyny (po opytu pervykh kampaniy i operatsiy vtoroy mirovoy voyny)" [The Initial Period of the War (from the Experience of the First Campaigns and Operations of World War II)], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, p 187.
- ⁴ [Not in text.]
- ⁵ [Not in text.]
- ⁶ [Not in text.]
- ⁷ See "Nachal'nyy period voyny," pp 133-134.
- ⁸ "Vtoraya mirovaya voyna 1939-1945 gg. Voenno-istoricheskiy ocherk" [World War II of 1939-1945. A Military History Essay], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1958, p 62.
- ⁹ See J. Butler, "Bol'shaya strategiya. Sentyabr' 1939--iyun' 1941" [Grand Strategy. September 1939-June 1941], Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1959, pp 47-53.
- ¹⁰ See: M. Matloff and E. Snell, "Strategicheskoye planirovaniye v koalitsionnoy voyne 1941-1942" [Strategic Planning in the Coalition War of 1941-1942], Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1955, p 68.
- ¹¹ See: *ibid.*, pp 80, 81.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p 94.

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DEVELOPMENT OF WEAPONRY, TACTICS IN RECENT LOCAL WARS TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 46-52

[Article by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Maj Gen V. Larionov:
"Certain Questions of Military Art from the Experience of Local Wars"]

[Text] Under conditions of the extreme danger of the outbreak of a world nuclear war, the imperialist states have also not abandoned local wars. In the course of these wars they have widely employed all types of modern weapons, including strategic ones, and in a number of instances have approached the brink beyond which the use of nuclear weapons could follow.

Consequently, the experience of local wars is of great value for elucidating certain trends in the development of military art.

In the methods of initiating local wars over the last 15-20 years nothing that is fundamentally new has appeared. Wars in their majority have been initiated by surprise by the aggressor states and preparations for attack and strategic deployment of the troops have been carried out ahead of time and secretly. The victim of the attack and its armed forces, as a rule, have been less battle-worthy and for this reason at the outset have been defeated. The Arab-Israeli War of 1967 and the Israeli aggression in Lebanon in 1982 were initiated in this manner.

A particular feature of the initiating of local wars, in comparison with the world ones, has been that the scope of measures related to strategic deployment have been significantly less. For this reason, it has been easier to achieve secret preparations and surprise of attack.

An analysis of this experience reminds all peace-loving nations of the need to maintain vigilance and keep the high combat readiness of the armed forces. Here it must be remembered that the presence of highly mobile forces and equipment (aviation, airborne and amphibious) in the armed forces of the imperialist states contributes to the surprise attack. In this regard, one has merely to mention the makeup of the U.S. Rapid Deployment Corps.

Surprise attacks involving modern military equipment are possible against the deepest, most vitally important targets, including control centers. Vivid confirmation of this was the strikes by Israeli aviation against deep Egyptian

airfields and military command posts in 1967. As is known, this act was preceded by preliminary, covert and secret preparations. The aggressor's plan was based on a surprise attack from the air with reliable intelligence data on the grouping of the Arab armed forces, their airfield network, the positions of the air defense units and other installations. Incidentally, the Israeli Military Command succeeded in obtaining these data with the aid of the U.S. CIA.

In the interests of achieving surprise, careful camouflaging of the concentration areas of the Israeli troops was carried out. It was prohibited to use radios for communicating between staffs and troops prior to their going over to the offensive. Preparations for the air attacks were kept particularly secret. At the airfields and in the air regular activities were strictly maintained. Flights by military aircraft close to the Arab frontiers were banned and the radius of flight by reconnaissance aircraft was limited. In the interests of deception, false airfields and landing strips were built and troop movements, particularly tank troops, were simulated. Two days before the attack in a number of second echelon units a brief leave was granted to the personnel.

The Israeli aggression commenced at dawn on 5 June 1967 by a surprise air strike against 16 Egyptian airfields. There was a second strike several hours later. As a result, over 200 Egyptian aircraft out of the 500 were destroyed (basically on the ground) and the landing strips were put out of operation at the airfields.¹ Characteristically the strikes were made from sectors not covered by the Egyptian air defense weapons, and under conditions of active jamming. Flights were made at low altitudes (50-150 m) and this impeded the detection of the aircraft by radar. Radio deception was widely employed. The successful strikes by Israeli aviation on the very first day of the war led to its winning of air supremacy. This ensured good conditions for the conduct of offensive operations by the ground troops.

A reliance on surprise in commencing military operations was also made in the 1973 October War but now from the Arab side and not only from the air but also on the ground. The offensive started on 6 October when Israel was celebrating the "Day of Atonement." Complete surprise was not achieved as Israeli intelligence on 4 October had discovered the approach of certain Egyptian and Syrian units to the front line. However, Israel was unable to completely prepare for repelling the attack. Military operations on the land front initially developed in favor of the Egyptians. They successfully crossed the Suez Canal, they broke through the heavily fortified positional defense and on the eastern bank of the canal captured two bridgeheads up to 16-22 km deep.² The Syrian Armed Forces captured the Golan Heights. But soon the Israeli Command was able to bring up reserves and make retaliatory strikes.

The desire to achieve surprise was most clearly apparent in the Israeli armed aggression in Lebanon in 1982. This started with the invading of the territory of South Lebanon by the previously readied forces of the Israeli Ground Troops with massed air and sea support. Simultaneously with the offensive on three land sectors (Maritime, Central and Eastern) amphibious and helicopter landing forces in the very first hours landed in the rear of the positions of the Palestinian Resistance detachments. Military operations commenced simultaneously on land, in the air and at sea. Here the objectives of the attacks by the Israeli

Air Force were primarily the air defense system on Lebanese territory and in the Bekaa Valley where the Syrian troops were positioned. From the very outset of the conflict, radio electronic warfare assumed great importance.

Thus, a surprise attack by a thoroughly prepared and maximally equipped aggressor army remains the basic method for initiating the local wars of our times. Along with this there has also been the escalating of military operations which have started either by the clash of hostile political groupings within a nation, by a border conflict between two small countries on the grounds of territorial disputes, or by attempts of a large imperialist power by intervention to prevent the overthrow of a reactionary puppet regime and so forth.

Local wars in Vietnam and Angola were initiated by the gradual escalating of military operations by imperialism and its supporters. The war in South Vietnam began with a clash between the national liberation detachments and the reactionary supporters of the imperialist powers, in particular the United States. Then it developed into an outright intervention by the U.S. Armed Forces and lasted almost 10 years. The civil war in Angola, having started in an armed clash between the detachments of the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA, grew into a struggle with military intervention by detachments of imperialist mercenaries. The Iraqi-Iranian War also rose not suddenly but rather was preceded by minor border clashes.

An escalating of a conflict also occurred in the course of the Anglo-Argentine War, regardless of the fact that it started with Argentina's surprise seizure of South Georgia Island of the archipelago of Falkland (Malvinas) Islands on 19 March 1982. Over 2 months were to pass from this action to the start of the landing on the Falklands (21 May) by the English landing force. During this time the Thatcher Government and the Military Command conducted additional mobilization measures, they put into effect a law on "Extraordinary Cabinet Powers" in the event of war, they organized a naval task force, dispatched it to the conflict area, organized a sea and air blockade of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands and prepared a landing operation. Of course, in the given instance the escalation of military operations was largely caused by the significant distance (13,000 km) of the conflict area from the homeland.

Characteristic of the given method of initiating a war is the gradual involvement of constantly new forces into the military operations (and at the first stage not the most effective means of combat may be employed).

On the particular features of employing the armed services and branches of troops. The experience of the local wars in the last two decades shows that as before they involve all the armed services. But while prior to the first half of the 1960's an exceptionally important role in the conduct of local wars was still given to the ground forces, later an ever-greater role began to be assigned to the air forces, navies, air defense and radio electronic warfare facilities. Thus, from 1969 the United States gradually reduced the contingent of its ground forces in Vietnam, while simultaneously increasing the air force and navy and the amount of technical assistance to the Saigon Army. The role of one or another armed service in each war varies. This is determined by the nature of the tasks to be carried out, by the character of the theater of war and by other conditions.

In recent local wars the methods of actions of the ground forces have been largely influenced by the wide employment of such new weapons as antitank guided missiles [ATGM] and helicopters as well as new devices for protecting tanks and infantry personnel.

Helicopter gunships began to be widely employed in the war in Vietnam, the first ATGM in the wars of 1967 and 1973 in the Near East and tank protection screens during the Israeli aggression in Lebanon in 1982. Very indicative in this regard was the 1967 Near East War. Although foreign specialists have also called it an "air war" it, as is known, also involved mass ground armies equipped with tanks, artillery and other weapons. In the course of it an increased role was taken by the highly maneuverable actions of small tank groups and airborne forces supported by aviation.

The 1973 October War has gone down in the foreign military lexicon as a "war of tactical guided missiles" of all types, primarily antitank ones. The clash on land was characterized by an acute battle between tanks and ATGM. This battle, in the conclusion of foreign specialists, at that time was won by the ATGM. Precisely their employment caused the mass losses in tanks and thwarted the planned operations. For example, 50 percent of the tanks lost by Israel were hit by ATGM, although they were only 11 percent of the Egyptian antitank weapons.³

The effective results of employing the antitank guided weapons in the 1973 war led to certain extremes in assessing the role of tanks. In a number of articles found in foreign journals, they began to be called a weapon of yesterday. But the rapid military-technical "competition" of attack and protective devices soon equalized the capabilities of the tanks and the antitank weapons.

In recent years, in land hostilities there has been an ever-stronger desire of the belligerents to conduct long-range combat and to hit the enemy at the maximum range of the weapons. The increased range, precision and effectiveness of the fire of tanks and artillery systems have objectively contributed to this.

The 1973 War showed that subunits of combat helicopters had become definitely established in the battle formation of the troops as a highly efficient means of hitting various targets.

From the experience of the wars in the Near East and in the zone of the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands, helicopter gunships carried out many combat missions for the first time. In the landing of the English troops on East Falkland they played an important role as a combat and support means of the landing operation and for the first time were employed on a mass scale at night for transporting personnel, heavy equipment and ammunition, for illuminating the terrain and for firing. Such diverse employment of the helicopters has opened up prospects for organizing and conducting so-called air-land operations of ground troops in the future. Even now these prospects are being widely discussed in the foreign press.

In infantry tactics recently, a tendency has been noted for shifting from dismounted attacks to attacks on armored personnel carriers and infantry combat vehicles. This appeared in the 1973 Near East War and became finally

established during the Israeli aggression in Lebanon and in the Anglo-Argentine conflict. This is also characteristic of infantry operations in the Iraqi-Iranian War.

Nighttime actions have assumed an ever-greater proportional amount in ground forces tactics and this has been brought about by the appearance of various night vision instruments in the armies of the developed capitalist countries. During the Anglo-Argentine War, nighttime combat held an important place. The English, in using the unpreparedness of the Argentine troops for nighttime operations, carried out both the landing on the coast and the assault of the Port Stanley administrative center only at night.

Of the experience of the combat employment of the air forces in local wars in recent years, the following should be noted. In the first place, in aviation, in addition to traditional aircraft, fundamentally new long-range radar detection aircraft have also appeared. These make it possible for the aircraft to be prepared ahead of time for combating an air enemy, to successfully combat the air defense weapons and to launch missiles without entering the zone of enemy radars. In the U.S. Armed Forces this is the AWACS System, in England the reconnaissance aircraft of the Nimrod MR2 class and in Israel the E2C Hawkeye.

Secondly, the air forces have responded quickly to the employment of anti-aircraft missile complexes which proved effective in Vietnam even in 1965. This response has been carried out by improving the aviation weapons, by developing and arming aircraft with equipment for radio electronic warfare and jamming the air defense weapons (this was carried out particularly successfully in Lebanon and in the Falklands) as well as developing new methods in the tactics of air operations. Among these one can also put the closing in with the target from many routes, flights at low and super-low altitudes and diversionary feint actions. The air battle formations more and more have begun to be split up into attack and support groups of aircraft. And the trend has been for the supporting (reconnaissance, feint, cover and diversionary) group to constantly increase.

Thirdly, as before the struggle for air supremacy has assumed ever-greater acuteness. But when the sides, particularly the victim of aggression, is confronted with the question of where to direct the basic forces, that is, at attacking deep targets or at supporting the actions of ground troops, with a shortage of aviation more and more the choice is made in favor of the latter.

Helicopters, as a weapon in recent local wars, have been used most in joint actions with ground troops. However, in being a means of army or troop aviation, they still have not ceased being an element of the air forces. In this capacity their functions have become significantly wider. From the experience of the Falkland conflict, helicopters carried out a rather broad range of purely aviation missions. They conducted reconnaissance at sea, they supported the landing of the forward detachments of the landing force, they corrected fire and ensured command and communications.⁴

The means and method of actions of air defense in local wars have also undergone noticeable changes. In the second half of the 1960's, such highly effective weapons as anti-aircraft missile complexes became established in the air

defense system. Their employment forced the American aggressors during the war in Vietnam to revise air tactics in attacking ground objectives. Subsequently the development of antiaircraft missile complexes has been carried out by increasing their range, resistance to jamming and mobility. As aviation equipment and electronic countermeasures have been improved, certain air defense weapons have become ineffective.

Recent wars have confirmed with new force the crucial role in successful air defense of the combat readiness of the air defense personnel and weapons to repel air strikes.

The basic directions in improving the air defense system from the experience of recent local wars are the following: the establishing of mixed groupings of air defense personnel and weapons (antiaircraft missile complexes, radars, and fighter aviation with various tactical and technical characteristics); the carrying out of major measures for the engineer equipping of the antiaircraft missile positions and the fighter air bases; further searches for new procedures and tactics of action.

In the local wars of the last two decades, one can note a growing role for the navy. In the Falkland conflict, for example, England was forced to utilize a significant portion of its naval forces (up to 50 combat vessels) in an area 13,000 km away from the homeland. And clearly this experience with good reason has been closely and thoroughly examined by the United States.

What new in naval art can be derived from the experience of utilizing the fleet in local wars in comparison, for example, with the 1960's? The first thing that should be noted is the employment of the new naval weapons which have appeared. For example, the short take-off and landing aircraft of the Sea Harrier class can be based on any ship where there is at least a small landing area. For this reason there is no need for expensive aircraft carriers and it is merely necessary to have ships which can carry aircraft.

As foreign specialists have pointed out, in the course of the Anglo-Argentine conflict, nuclear submarines were employed for the first time to carry out combat missions. As the result of an attack by such a boat, the Argentine cruiser "General Belgrano" was sunk.

The experience of recent wars has confirmed that, regardless of the appearance of missiles and antimissile systems on ships, the old artillery ship systems have not lost their importance and their employment does not depend upon the weather and radio electronic interference and ensures support for the combat of ground troops on shore.

Due to the employment of new devices, including information from satellites, in the naval operations of foreign fleets the methods of reconnaissance and target designation have changed noticeably and this has had a definite impact on the planning and conduct of naval operations.

On command and control of troops. The experience of local wars has shown that no matter how perfect a command and control system may be which is established for the eventuality of a crisis situation, with the start of the conflict its

flaws and the necessity of a fundamental or partial reorganization have always been disclosed. For example, in the Anglo-Argentine conflict, along with the permanent peacetime military bodies (the Defense Committee in England and the Military Committee in Argentina) the need arose to appoint a commander for direct leadership over the operations. In England the commander of the naval task force in the South Atlantic was appointed to this position. The Argentines did not have such a commander-in-chief and this was one of the reasons for the uncoordinated actions in their armed services. In the Iraqi-Iranian War, in the armies of both belligerents, with the outbreak of military operations, additional operational leadership bodies were established in the various combat zones.

In troop command and control there has been a tendency for ever-greater centralization. Thus, during the Anglo-Argentine conflict, command and control over the task force and submarines deployed in the South Atlantic were provided from the Royal Navy Command Center in Northwood (near London) regardless that a task force headquarters was established on board the carrier "Hermes" for immediate leadership of the forces in the conflict area.

Great changes, judging from the experience of recent local wars, are also occurring in the organization of command and control of the weapons complexes including aviation, missile-artillery and so forth. Combat control centers have begun to be organized in the interests of unifying and coordinating the efforts of the same weapons from the bottom up.

For controlling troops in combat and an operation they have begun to set up ground mobile centers (on tanks, armored personnel carriers and motor vehicles) as well as airborne centers on helicopters and aircraft. From the experience of the Anglo-Argentine conflict, multiple duplication of the radio channels is employed while satellite systems and stationary peacetime centers are widely employed for communications and target designation.

Thus, the experience of local wars points to the further development of military art on the basis of employing new types of weapons and combat equipment. A thorough study of this experience will help to increase the theoretical level of command personnel and to the successful carrying out of the missions confronting them.

FOOTNOTES

¹ "Lokal'nyye voyny. Istoriya i sovremennost'" [Local Wars. History and Modern Times], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1981, pp 145, 147.

² Ibid., pp 157, 158.

³ Ibid., p 242.

⁴ As a total the English Command in the conflict employed 136 helicopters of 8 types with high effectiveness. During May alone the flying time of the Sea King helicopters was 1,560 hours and this was the equivalent of keeping 2 helicopters constantly in the air around-the-clock. During the conflict,

each crew member flew 270 hours and this is an annual standard. See INTERNATIONAL DEFENSE REVIEW, 1982, vol 15, No 8, pp 978-979.

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WORLD WAR II: LIBERATION OF TERNOPOL RECALLED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 60-66

[Article by Maj Gen (Res) A. Nikitan: "The Liberation of Ternopol"; during the described period the author was chief of staff of the 336th Zhitomir Rifle Division]

[Text] In the western part of the Podolsk Hills, in the forest steppe zone, along the banks of the Seret River, stretches one of the most beautiful cities of the Ukraine, Ternopol. The Nazi Command called this city the "gates" to Lvov and southern Poland. It was the lot of the 60th Army of the First Ukrainian Front to throw open these symbolic "gates." This army also included our 336th Zhitomir Rifle Division.

After repelling a strong counterstrike by the Nazi troops in the concluding stage of the Zhitomir-Berdichev Operation in the area to the southwest of the town of Polonnoye in Khmel'nitskiy Oblast, our division at the end of February 1944 was moved into the second echelon of the XV Rifle Corps of the 60th Army. On 28 February the division's command post in the village of Novoselitsy was visited by the commander of the XV Rifle Corps, one of the heroes of the defense of Stalingrad, Lt Gen I. I. Lyudnikov.

"Well, Zhitomir fighters, are you tired of resting?" he asked both of us, having heard the briefing by the division commander, Col M. A. Ignachev. "Comrades, we must get ready for a long march. The corps will be fighting in the second echelon of the army on the general axis of Ternopol. Think out the organization of the night marches well."

Having said farewell to the corps commander, Col Ignachev turned to me:

"Let us not lose any time. The artillery commander, the chief of artillery weapons and I will travel to the corps and you will give the preliminary orders for the units to march...."

The division immediately began preparing for the forthcoming battles. The work of the political personnel was directed by the deputy commander for political affairs and chief of the division's political section, Lt Col K. M. Moskovskiy. Meetings, assemblies, talks and political information sessions were held. The men inducted from the liberated oblasts of the Ukraine were acquainted with the

campaign record of the formation, the division's traditions and the glorious feats of their fellow servicemen and veterans of our units. Our divisional newspaper SNAYPER also made its contribution to this. There was a larger flow of applications to join the party and the Komsomol. In just one week from 23 through 29 February, the division's political section presented 62 cards to candidate members of the VKP(b) [All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)] and 130 Komsomol cards.

Under the conditions of the commencing spring muddy season, the troops on the right wing of the First Ukrainian Front on 3 March 1944 went over to the offensive. During the night of 4 March, our division began its march. Two routes had been surveyed and reconnoitered in a zone of advance 8 km wide. Along the right one traveled the 1128th Rifle Regiment under the command of Lt Col Kh. D. Zamanov and along the left the 1130th Rifle Regiment (commander, Lt Col K. I. Kuropyatnik) and behind it the 1132d Rifle Regiment (regimental commander, Col K. Z. Fedorov). The divisional units traveled behind the 1128th Rifle Regiment. The vanguard rifle battalions were 5-8 km ahead of the rifle regiments. In the area of Izyaslavl they were reinforced by regimental artillery and combat engineers. Here also artillery battalions from the 909th Artillery Regiment (commander, Maj A. N. Checherin) joined the columns of rifle regiments. The march lasted 4 days. Over this time the division's men covered 140 km. The column of artillery on mechanical traction and all the motor vehicles had fallen 70-80 km behind due to the mud.

At that time, the officers of the staffs of the divisions, regiments and battalions worked without resting. During the daytime halts they organized security for the positions of the units and subunits, they conducted reconnaissance for the routes for the forthcoming move, they collected data on the position of the units of the XXIII Rifle Corps which were fighting ahead and the opposing enemy units and they prepared battle reports, operational summaries and combat orders for the units.

It was not an easy matter to organize well coordinated work by the collective of the division's staff and headquarters and effectively control this under those conditions. I succeeded in doing so only by great effort. I clearly lacked theoretical preparation as at that time I did not have an academy education. And my age of 24, even for wartime, was considered very young for a formation's chief of staff. An important role was played by the support of my immediate superiors, the divisional commander M. A. Ignachev, his deputy Col I. I. Petukhov and the former chief of staff, Col V. S. Kryukov, all participants of the Civil War who generously shared with me all that they knew. Also coming in handy was my own combat experience (I had received my baptism in combat during the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940).

From the intelligence data on 4 March, we learned that the enemy had hurriedly taken up the defensive using the retreating units along a line of the northern outskirts of the town of Zbarazh, including Nizh. Lubyanki, to Maksimovka, and was moving up the fresh Nazi 154th Reserve Infantry Division to this sector from Ternopol. Our division received the mission of entering battle on the morning of 8 March from the line of Novyy Rogovets, 3 km to the north of Maksimovka and in cooperation with units from the IV Guards Tank Corps, to break through the enemy defenses and then, in rapidly developing the offensive toward Chernelev

Russkiy and Velikiye Gai, to capture Ternopol. At the same time on the right the 322d Rifle Division was to be committed to battle and this was also part of the XV Rifle Corps. The commitment to combat was carried out in an organized manner, we were precisely and smoothly supported by the artillery of the corps and army while our fighter aviation provided a secure air cover. The division organized its battle formation in two echelons. Advancing in the first were the 1128th and 1130th Rifle Regiments. The 1132d Rifle Regiment was in the second echelon. By 1200 hours on 8 March, we had broken through the enemy defenses on the intermediate line. Over the 2 days, we had fought our way to a depth of 28 km, having liberated 29 population points in Zbarazhskiy and Ternopolskiy Rayons. In these battles over 800 Nazis were destroyed and 44 taken prisoner, including the commander of an armored train. We captured an armored train, 2 dumps with food and fodder, 25 railroad cars with military supplies, 12 motor vehicles, 3 radios, over 150 machine guns and automatics and 180 rifles.¹

The artillery troops ensured the successful advance of the infantry. Their actions were skillfully controlled by the artillery chiefs of our regiments, Maj I. P. Bel'ko and Capt I. M. Duz'. We were also well supported by the tank troops of the IV Guards Tank Corps with whom we were able to organize close cooperation. But the main thing was that under these very difficult conditions our soldiers and commanders fought excellently.

In developing the offensive, at dawn of 10 March, the 1128th Rifle Regiment was approaching Ternopol and initiated combat on the southern outskirts of the city. The enemy undertook counterattacks three times, each time with the forces of up to an infantry battalion and five-six tanks. These counterattacks were successfully driven off.

During the night of 11 March, the 1130th and 1132d Rifle Regiments crossed the Seret and captured Petrikov in force. On 12 March, the division received a new mission: with two regiments to cross the Serets at the southern outskirts of Ternopol and striking north to capture the suburb of Zagrobelya. The 1128th Rifle Regiment was ordered to capture the city in cooperation with units of the 332d Rifle Division.²

In carrying out the order, during the night of 13 March, the 1130th Rifle Regiment fought its way across the river and occupied a bridgehead that was 2.5 km wide along the front and up to 2 km in depth. By morning, two battalions of the 1132d Rifle Regiment had crossed to it. It seemed that everything was developing for the best. The division's actions had conformed to the designated plan. But the enemy had succeeded in secretly moving up from the rear areas and concentrating in the forests to the west of the village of Ostrov the fresh 359th Infantry Division numbering more than 12,500 men. Not only our divisional but also the army and front reconnaissance had not been able to detect its approach. And for this we had to pay a dear price....

At 0740 hours on 13 March, the Nazis made a counterstrike from two directions: the southern edge of Ternopol, Velikiye Gai and Velikiye Berezovitsy, Velikiye Gai. Fighting on each sector were at least an infantry regiment with the support of 10-15 tanks. The enemy attack was such a surprise that by 1200 hours

it had succeeded in breaking into the western part of the village of Velikiye Gai and surrounding our units on the western bank of the Seret River.

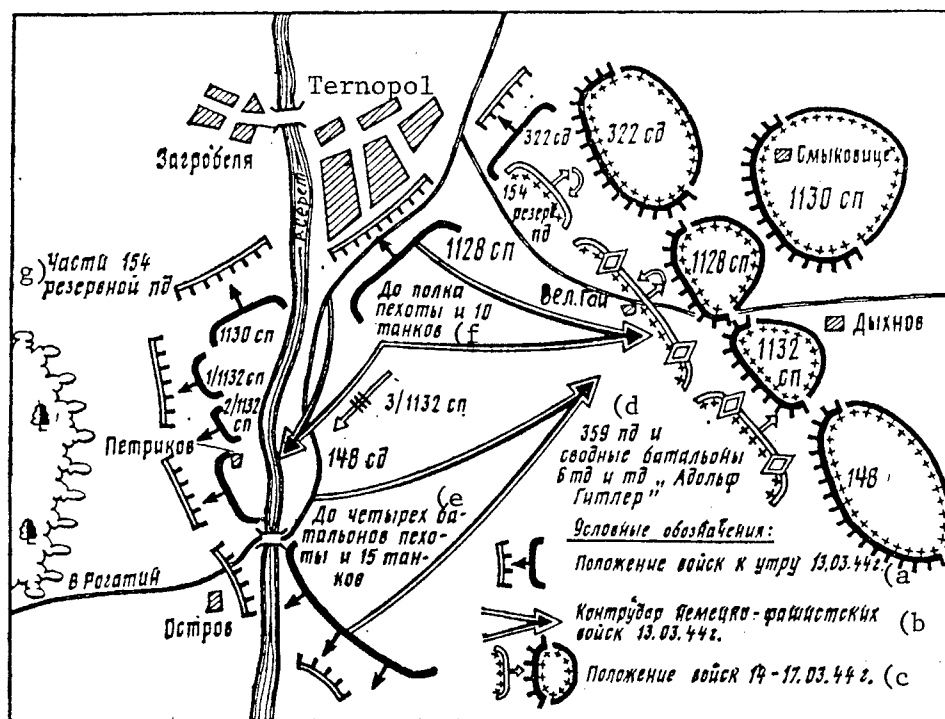


Diagram of Combat of 336th Rifle Division
on Approach to Ternopol

- Key:
- a--Position of troops by morning of 13 March 1944
 - b--Counterstrike by Nazi troops on 13 March 1944
 - c--Position of troops on 14-17 March 1944
 - d--359th Infantry Division and composite battalions of the 6th Tank Division and the Adolph Hitler Tank Division
 - e--Up to 4 infantry battalions and 15 tanks
 - f--Up to an infantry regiment and 10 tanks

In the developing situation, the division's commander took a decision to organize all-round defense for the surrounded units in the occupied area while the remaining units were to retreat to a line of the villages of Baykovtsy, Velikiye Borki, where they were to go over to the defensive, preventing an enemy breakthrough to Zbarazh. This decision was confirmed by the corps commander who ordered that the 1130th Rifle Regiment and two battalions of the 1132d Rifle Regiment be pulled out of the encirclement.

It must be particularly emphasized that, regardless of the very complex situation which had arisen, in the division's units and subunits there were no instances of panic. The Zhitomir soldiers met the fierce pressure of the Nazis in an organized manner. The documents clearly confirm this. Here is an excerpt from the division's combat reports from those times: "In the morning of 13 March the 1/909 Artillery Regiment under the command of the battalion

commander A. A. Gusev was moving to new firing positions. Suddenly it was attacked by 10 enemy tanks. Upon the commander's command, the battalion quickly deployed. The gun commanders, Communists I. Kopylenko and N. Alimov hit 2 tanks and 8 motor vehicles carrying infantry. The second battery of this battalion which had been the first to change firing positions was encircled. But the personnel did not lose their head. Under the leadership of the battery commander, the communist Sr Lt V. I. Dmitriyenko, the battery by direct laying destroyed more than 100 Nazis, made a breach in the ring of encirclement and pulled out all the weapons and all the personnel."³

The organizing of a secure defense on the new line was aided by the approach of three howitzer batteries from the 909th Artillery Regiment and the 254th Separate Antitank Battalion. Under the leadership of Lt Col Kuropyatnik, the officers of its staff and the battalion commanders, during the night of 14 March the subunits of the 1130th Rifle Division broke out of the ring of encirclement and linked up with the division's main forces.

From 14 through 17 March, on the line taken up for the defensive, the division's units drove off fierce attacks by superior enemy forces. The Nazi Command, in addition to the 359th Infantry Division, had concentrated opposite us composite battalions from the 68th Rifle Division, the 7th Tank Division and the Adolph Hitler SS Tank Division which had been broken up in previous battles. Each day at least four attacks had to be driven off.

During these days, the men from the 6th Company of the 1128th Rifle Regiment which was under the command of the courageous officer and Komsomol member Lt I. P. Maksimov and the artillery troops from the regimental battery of the 1132d Rifle Regiment under the command of the communist, Sr Lt K. Ya. Novokshonov particularly distinguished themselves. They caused great losses to the enemy infantry and by accurate firing of antitank rifles and guns hit six enemy tanks.

The defenses had to be organized under enemy fire, repelling its continuous attacks. Here our combat engineers showed their stuff under the leadership of the divisional engineer, Maj V. A. Manvel'yan. In constantly risking their lives they quickly set over a thousand antitank mines in the most vulnerable sectors. Soon these were responsible for blowing up four Nazi tanks and three armored personnel carriers.

During this difficult time, the unbroken link between the army and the people was particularly apparent. The population in the liberated areas endeavored in every possible way to help our men who had fallen into a difficult situation. The deputy divisional commander for the rear services, Maj F. I. Len'kov, and the chief of artillery weapons Maj G. I. Voychenko in the neighboring villages organized an entire wagon train of 80 wagons. Regardless of the mud, these continuously brought up weapons and promptly evacuated the wounded.

By 18 March, the enemy forces, as could be seen, had been exhausted and they broke off the attack. The division's units received an order to prepare for going over to the offensive. In the morning of 21 March, after brief but powerful artillery and air softening up, it went over to the offensive and during a day of heavy fighting advanced 4 km, reaching the Ternopol--Velikiye Borki

highway. On 22 March we took the village of Velikiye Gai by storm as it had been turned by the enemy into a strongly fortified strongpoint. The enemy left on the battlefield 300 killed soldiers and officers. A Nazi armored train was destroyed and two "Tiger" tanks in working order and two "Ferdinand" self-propelled guns were captured.³

On the same day, important events were developing on our sector of the front. Units of the 1st Tank Army which had been committed to battle advanced rapidly to the south in the direction of Trembovlya, Chortkov. In benefiting from their successful advance, the troops of the 60th Army outflanked Ternopol to the north and south and closed the ring of encirclement around the city with the divisions of the XV Rifle Corps while the other formations created an external perimeter along the line Ozernaya, Gorodishche, Nadrechnoye.

By this time the Nazi Command had completely prepared Ternopol and its suburb of Zagrobelya for a protracted defense. On the outskirts, three lines of trenches had been dug and these were covered by minefields and wire obstacles. All the brick houses which had been prepared for all-round defense were, in essence, actual pillboxes. Many streets were blocked by barricades. The garrison of the surrounded enemy grouping numbered over 16,000 men with over 12,000 directly in Ternopol and around 4,000 in Zagrobelya.

In order to avoid unnecessary bloodshed and prevent the destruction of the city's historical monuments and the death of peaceful inhabitants, the Military Council of the 60th Army instructed the command of our division to transmit a surrender ultimatum to the surrounded garrison prior to 2200 hours on 24 March.

For presenting the ultimatum, at 1500 hours on 24 March, a group of truce envoys from the division's reconnaissance company was sent into the city. Four hours later it returned safely with a reply from Maj Gen Nenodorf, the commander of the surrounded enemy grouping. The latter requested that the surrender be put off until 0800 hours on 25 March in order to have some time for consideration, to draw up a plan and issue orders for an organized surrender. The army military council granted the putting off of the start of the surrender and ordered that there be no firing at the positions of the surrounded enemy troops until 0800 hours on 25 March. However, it turned out that the Nazi Command had merely resorted to a treacherous trick in order to win time to further strengthen their defenses. At 0755 hours on 25 March the Nazis opened up fire from all types of weapons against the division's battle formations. This lasted 20 minutes....

At 1000 hours on 25 March, the division's units began to storm the city.⁵ This continued for several days. On 29 March, the corps commander, Lt Gen I. I. Lyudnikov, arrived at the division's command-observation post in the area of the stone quarry. Having carefully listened to the briefing by the divisional commander and having questioned me on the intelligence data, the organization of communications and the manning of the units and subunits, he said:

"We cannot fight in the city by the offensive method as in a clear field. All the more as here the Nazis are resisting just as strongly as in Stalingrad but their defenses are much more strongly organized considering the experience of previous battles. For this reason switch to actions using assault detachments

and groups. Today the 302d Rifle Division will go into battle from the north. Together with it you must destroy the enemy in the city."

Work began on planning combat in a rather large underground room of the school building in the area of the stone quarry. The plan was based on the decision of the divisional commander: each assault detachment should consist of a rifle battalion or rifle company reinforced by a company or platoon of combat engineers, a mortar company, an artillery battery of regimental or divisional artillery, a company or platoon of heavy tanks or SAU [self-propelled artillery mount] from the attached division of the 1828th Heavy Tank and SAU Regiment (without one battalion). There should be from three to six detachments in a rifle regiment. Their number was determined from the number of blocks which the company had to capture in carrying out the immediate task. In turn an assault detachment was made up of five or six assault groups (in each of these there was from an infantry platoon to a company, one or two combat engineer squads, a platoon of mortars and one or two guns). Also organized were fire support groups for the assault detachments and groups as well as groups for neutralizing the enemy artillery and mortar batteries.

The actions of the assault detachments were to commence in the morning of 30 March. On that day, the division's regiments, in storming each house, began to advance toward the city center. Control over the assault detachments and troops was provided from the command-observation posts of the regiments and these were located 500-800 m from the forward edge. The command posts of the assault detachments were even closer to the enemy, some 200-500 m from it. The basic demand was that the officer directing combat be able to visually observe the battle formations of his subunits and the buildings which were the object of the attack.

By 3 April the Nazi invaders had been cleared out of 16 blocks of the city and an assault detachment from the 1128th Rifle Regiment had captured the station. Here the Soviet troops had destroyed over 1,000 Nazis and captured 28. In the battles for the station, the assault group under the command of the commander of the 7th Rifle Company from the 1128th Rifle Regiment, Lt Sidorkin, particularly distinguished itself. A private from this company, Aleksandr Vityuk, with an antitank grenade hit a "Tiger" tank and destroyed its crew with an automatic while Pvt Aleksandr Miroshnichenko killed 13 Nazis directly in the station building and captured two.⁶

Many such enterprising actions were noted in each assault detachment and group. The artillery troops from the 254th Separate Antitank Battalion under the command of Maj P. F. Babanskiy made up a fourth battery using captured 75-mm guns. It had an unlimited supply of shells (a dump had been captured) and fired continuously at the upper floors of buildings, the attics and bell towers, that is, at those places where enemy command and observation posts might be located.

As our troops advanced toward the city center, Nazi resistance constantly increased. Battles lasting several hours and even days went on not only for each building but also for individual floors. The diameter of the ring of encirclement around the enemy grouping was constantly being narrowed. The use of ground attack aviation as well as bombers under these conditions was excluded as there was the threat of hitting our troops. For this reason, the commander

of the air army, Col Gen Avn S. A. Krasovskiy, took a decision to make a bomb attack using two regiments of light night bombers under daytime conditions. This was a rare instance of such employment of the PO-2 aircraft in the course of the entire war. At the end of 13 April, 92 PO-2 aircraft dropped their bombload on the enemy centers of resistance. The bombing lasted over an hour. Not letting the enemy recover from this attack, the division's units began the concluding nighttime assault.

During the night of 15 April, having left the 1132d Rifle Regiment on the southern edge of the city to get itself in order, our division crossed the Seret. The 1128th and 1130th Rifle Regiments took up the jump-off position in the southern and southeastern parts of Zagrobelya for finally wiping up the remnants of the surrounded enemy grouping. After a fierce battle, the regiments succeeded in breaking into the settlement. Street battles lasted the entire day. Individual enemy groups resisted until the morning of 16 April. On that day the men of the division destroyed around 1,000 Nazis. Those remaining alive were taken prisoner. The units of our division captured 1,080 soldiers and officers as well as 7 tanks, 25 guns, 1 SAU, 83 motor vehicles, 10 radios, 65 machine guns and several thousand automatics and rifles.

The Nazi Command repeatedly endeavored to relieve the surrounded grouping. These attempts were checked by preventive attacks by the troops of the 60th Army. On 16 April, the division's units left liberated Ternopol. The faces of the men shown with happiness. An order from the Supreme Commander-in-Chief had been announced in which the men of the division were commended for liberating this city. In the evening of 15 April, the capital of our motherland, Moscow, with 20 artillery salvos from 224 guns saluted our victory. The 1128th and 1130th Rifle Regiments were given the honorary name of Ternopol.⁷

Some 40 springs have passed since the red banner of liberation was raised over destroyed Ternopol. A beautiful modern city has been built on its ruins by the labor of two generations. Today Ternopol is one of the major industrial and cultural centers of the Soviet Ukraine.

This city, a city of military and labor glory, lives a full, happy life. The city inhabitants hold sacred the memory of their liberators. At its center are streets named for Gen Lyudnikov and Col Ignachev, monuments have been erected to the artillery and tank troops and to the pilots. There is also a memorial complex honoring the liberator soldiers of Ternopol and a Park of Glory has been built.

FOOTNOTES

¹ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 846, inv. 90156, file 8, sheets 63-65.

² Ibid., sheets 65-66.

³ Ibid., folio 1651, inv. 1, file 76, sheet 155.

⁴ Ibid., sheets 162-163.

⁵ Ibid., folio 1251, inv. 1, file 76, sheets 166-168.

⁶ Ibid., folio 1651, inv. 1, file 76, sheets 181-183.

⁷ Ibid., sheets 220-226.

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WORLD WAR II: SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR MAR ZHUKOV DESCRIBED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 66-68

[Article by Lt Col (Ret) A. Nazarov: "Under Assignment of the Command"; during the described period, Maj A. Nazarov was carrying out the duties of the chief of liaison for the staff of the First Ukrainian Front to the 1st Tank Army]

[Text] On 21 March 1944, the main grouping of the First Ukrainian Front reinforced by the front's reserves, including the 1st Tank Army (commander, Lt Gen Tank Trps M. Ye. Katukov) by a powerful attack shattered enemy resistance on the line of Ternopol, Volochisk, Proskurov and rushed to the south.

Upon instructions from the chief of the operations directorate of the front's staff, Maj N. O. Pavlovskiy, from the morning of 21 March I was at the staff of the 1st Tank Army.

By the end of the day I had plotted the last data on the position of the army's troops on my working chart and drove off to the front's staff to report.

In developing a rapid offensive, the forward units of the 1st Tank Army on 23 March had liberated Chortkov, and on the 24th its troops had crossed the Dnestr without halting. But as a result of an enemy counterstrike, a portion of its rear services had been cut off from the main forces, contact with the army was broken and reports were not coming in. This had to be reported to the chief.

"Do you understand what it means to be out of contact with the most active army?!" said N. O. Pavlovskiy with indignation. "What an extraordinary event! We cannot contact Katukov!...What is the matter?! Undertake any measures to establish contact with the army!..."

After reporting I returned to the radio operator hut. They informed me that I should report immediately to the wire communications center. I ran there. I had just opened the door and the Baudot equipment operator Lyuba Nikitina was already pointing to the moving tape and explained briefly:

"It is a message from the General Staff!"

The tape continued to come out of the equipment. I spread out my work chart. Some 15 minutes later, with the help of a code book, the figures turned into words and entire sentences. It was a combat report from the 1st Tank Army transmitted via the Main Operations Directorate and gave in detail the actions of the army's troops, how and where the XI Guards Tank Corps and the VIII Guards Mechanized Corps, their brigades and even individual subunits were fighting, as well as about the men who had distinguished themselves in engagements against the Nazi occupiers.

But they were in no hurry to report the main thing: what lines had been reached by the units and formations of the 1st Tank Army! At the front's staff, I was met by the Chief of the Directorate and I was ordered to immediately go to see the front's chief of staff.

During the report to Lt Gen A. N. Bogolyubov, I could feel his mistrust in the facts as outlined by me.

"It is unbelievable that Katukov's tank troops are so far away. They were not out on a march, but were engaged in heavy battles, and were crossing the Dnestr at the moment of spring flooding. Who signed the combat report?"

"The commander, the member of the military council and the army chief of staff."

"Are you convinced of the reliability of the coded message, Comrade Nazarov?"

"I am certain, comrade general. All the more as it came from the General Staff."

A. N. Bogolyubov nodded and said quietly:

"The General Staff is of unquestionable authority, there is no doubt about it, but still the information came to us second hand. Possibly mistakes were made. Take your chart and go immediately to see Mar Zhukov! He just telephoned and has ordered you to report personally to him with the situational data."

I immediately rushed to the building where G. K. Zhukov was. To my knock on the door, a major general came out and said strictly:

"Impossible! The marshal is busy."

But, evidently seeing the determination in my eyes, the general permitted me first to go into the reception room and then reported my arrival to the marshal.

"Don't delay! Bring him in quickly!" I heard the commander's voice.

Going in, I saw G. K. Zhukov sitting on a iron field cot. I had just begun to report when he stopped me and ordered:

"Report on the position of the 1st Tank Army!"

Having quickly opened up my chart, I spread it out on a small table by the bed and began to show the corps positions with a pencil. When I pointed to Chernovtsy

which had been half surrounded by the 64th Guards Tank Brigade of Lt Col I. N. Boyko and announced that the 1st Guards Tank Brigade under the command of Col V. M. Gorelov had broken into the city of Kolomyia and seized dumps with military equipment, ammunition and food as well as several trains with spare parts for tanks and aircraft, the marshal angrily interrupted me:

"What are you bringing me!...I will punish you for this rot!..."

"Comrade commander, permit me by 0500 hours in the morning to give you a new combat report from the army!"

"How will you do that?"

"I will fly there. This report gives a landing strip on the northwestern edge of the town of Obertyn where the army staff is located."

"They will shoot you down. The Germans have broken out of the encirclement on a front of about 100 km."

"They won't get in the way...we will get there...."

"Well, if you think so...I wish you success!" said G. K. Zhukov.

From the reception room of the commander I phoned the commander of the liaison air regiment and requested an aircraft with an experienced pilot.

...We were on our way. I twisted my head in various directions watching so that enemy aircraft would not approach us from the rear and fire on our U-2. Beneath us was the major rail junction of the town of Chortkov which just several days previously had been liberated by the troops of the 1st Tank Army. You could see shell bursts from weapons. Why? Later I learned that the army's rear services were in the city and the rear troops at times were firing at Nazis who had broken out of the encirclement.

It began to grow dark. Down below was enemy territory. Around us were different color tracer bullets. My pilot maneuvered skillfully, trying to get out of range. He succeeded. But several minutes later we were again fired on....

To the south of Chortkov were solid enemy columns. By the motor vehicles were groups of soldiers pushing them out of the mud.... Again disordered fire and again tracer bullets surrounded our aircraft....

We were approaching Obertyn and made two circles. Soon bonfires appeared. We flew toward them and made a turn. Three green rockets went off. We came in for a landing. The skis hit the ground. I jumped out of the aircraft and rushed to the building where the army chief of staff was. The staff officers greeted me along with Lt Gen M. A. Shalin. Everyone was pleased that their liaison had arrived. I briefly informed them on the position of the advancing troops of the front and then with M. A. Shalin went to see the commander. At that moment he was with the member of the army military council, Maj Gen Tank Trps N. K. Popel'.

"I told you," said M. Ye. Katukov with a sly smile to the chief of staff, "when wire communications fail, switch to radio, when radio contact goes out, expect a live person. Since antiquity live communication has been and remains the most dependable." He turned to me: "Welcome, our dear liaison!" and shook my hand firmly.

Upon instructions of the chief of staff, the operations section began processing the documents and sometime later a combat report with a map showing the position of the army troops was in my case.

I was back in the air. The dense low cloudiness and darkness protected us well against attacks by air pirates. On the other hand the enemy antiaircraft machine guns fired on us tirelessly. Tracers covered our aircraft from all sides. Again the pilot's skill came in handy. By some special sense he knew where the tracers would come from and headed the aircraft away from them.

At around 0500 hours in the morning we landed back at our airfield. In a duty vehicle I was driven directly to the commander's house, as he had ordered. A dull light shown from the windows through the blackout. "Probably he has still not laid down to rest," I thought.

I knocked at the door. It was opened by the same general. Seeing me, he said quietly:

"The marshal has been working all night and has just laid down to rest."

"I have just returned from Katukov. I carried out the marshal's order. I must personally give the combat report to him.

He frowned and let me into the reception room.

The marshal took the papers from me and began to carefully examine the position of the 1st Tank Army troops from the map and then read the combat report. Then it seemed to me that he was getting ready to take some new major decision. I quietly left the room and went to see Gen A. N. Bogolyubov.

After reporting to him on carrying out the assignment of the commander, I was approached by the chief of the front's political directorate, Maj Gen S. S. Shatilov. It should be pointed out that he more often than any other political worker visited the front's operations directorate. After the chief of staff, he shook my hand and somewhat happily and warmly said:

"Alive, healthy and, it seems to me, without a scratch," he said examining me all around. "But you do not take care of your overcoat, comrade major! The back flaps have bullet holes!"

"It is only an overcoat! He does not take care of aircraft: he took off on a U-2 and came back on a sieve," joked Gen A. N. Bogolyubov. "The aviators phoned and said that they counted so many holes that the aircraft had to be sent away for a major overhaul. But a general thanks, Comrade Nazarov, for carrying out the commander's order. Mar Zhukov just phoned and said that the data delivered by you on the position of the tank army impelled him to take a

new decision. Substantial adjustments will be made in the operations plan to defeat the enemy. We are putting you up for a governmental decoration."

The decades have passed but I have always remembered that flight. I have merely to close my eyes and in my mind I can see again the brightly shining sheaf of enemy tracer bullets.

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COUNTERPREPARATION FIRE IN WORLD WAR II DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS TRACED

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[Article by Candidate of Military Sciences, Docent, Lt Gen Art V. Piratov:
"The Organization and Execution of Artillery Counterpreparation Fire in the
Defensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] In the course of carrying out a series of defensive operations during the years of the Great Patriotic War, the Soviet Command planned and carried out artillery counterpreparation fire in the aim of checking an offensive or reducing the force of the initial strike by the main enemy forces. This method of causing damage to the enemy was also not new in Soviet military art. Thus, the Field Manual (PU-36) and Artillery Field Manual (BUA-II-37) pointed out that the basic mission in artillery counterpreparation fire is to check an enemy attack being prepared. This should be carried out in accord with the decision of the corps commander concerning the enemy troops concentrated in the staging area for the offensive, the artillery batteries, ammunition dumps, command posts and communications centers. Fire was to be carried out predominantly from temporary positions by surprise and heavy bombarding. The length of the artillery counterpreparation fire was to be set by the corps commander and averaged 15-20 minutes.¹

The all-arms and artillery commanders endeavored to carry out the requirements of the manuals from the very first days of the war. But, unfortunately, they did not always succeed in doing this as they lacked both artillery and ammunition, as a rule, for checking the enemy attack.² It was extremely difficult even to carry out such a minor task of weakening the strength of the initial Nazi attack by causing partial damage to the enemy troops by concentrated fire due to the lack of reliable data on the place and time of the concentrating of the enemy troops in the initial position for the attack. The reason for this was the poor work of our intelligence bodies and a lack of ground and air reconnaissance equipment. Also unworkable was the recommendation of the Artillery Field Manual for firing during the counterpreparation fire from temporary firing positions, as under the conditions of the enemy air supremacy this led to unjustified losses in the maneuvering of the artillery battalions and regiments.

Subsequently, as the artillery and ammunition increased in the operational army, as the organization of enemy reconnaissance improved and the command personnel

gained experience in conducting a defensive, the artillery counterpreparation fire became a permanent part of combat practice. It was carried out often together with air counterpreparation fire, however, it was not organized as it had been assumed prior to the war. Due to the fact that a significant amount of artillery (primarily of the RVGK [Reserve of the Supreme High Command]) had to be concentrated for hitting the assault groups organized by the enemy on a broad front, the decision for planning and carrying out artillery counterpreparation fire was basically taken by the commander of a front and only in individual instances by the commander of an army.

The decision of the commander of a front usually gave: the most probable sectors of advance, the concentration areas, the jump-off position of the enemy troops, the missions of counterpreparation fire and the artillery formations and units (subunits) to be involved in it, the procedure for conducting the fire (the configuration of counterpreparation fire which ordinarily included artillery strikes and battery fire at individual targets).

Detailed plans for the artillery counterpreparation fire were worked out by the army artillery staffs. These gave the assumed sectors of enemy operations, the counterpreparation areas and the signals for calling in fire, they made provisions for organizing reconnaissance and observation, they gave specific fire tasks to the artillery units and formations and set the overall consumption of ammunition. The calculation of the area of the sections for neutralizing the enemy batteries and the planning of ammunition consumption for specific targets were entrusted to the commanders of the artillery formations.

The first attempts in carrying out artillery counterpreparation fire were undertaken in the autumn of 1941 at Leningrad and Moscow. On the Leningrad Front in September 1941, in the defensive zone of the 42d Army, counterpreparation fire was carried out three times. The first was on the morning of 10 September upon a decision of the front's commander, Mar SU K. Ye. Voroshilov, in the aim of checking the Nazi advance on the axis of Krasnoye Selo, Leningrad. Involved in the counterpreparation fire, in addition to the army artillery, were the 101st and 541st Howitzer Artillery Regiments of the RVGK, the 47th and 73d Corps Artillery Regiments and the artillery of the Red Banner Baltic Fleet which had been attached to the field force.³ The counterpreparation plan was worked out in detail by the army artillery staff. It was approved by the army commander and the front's artillery chief. In the course of the counterpreparation fire which lasted 30 minutes, the enemy suffered great losses in tanks and infantry which were on the initial lines for the attack at Krasnogvardeysk (Gatchina). The enemy was able to resume the offensive only in the second half of the day and only after reinforcing the troops with another tank division.

Counterpreparation firing in the 42d Army of the Leningrad Front was also planned and carried out on 21 and 24 September 1941. The aim of this was to check the enemy offensive toward Pulkovo. Involved in the counterpreparation fire of 21 September was the artillery of the army and the Red Banner Baltic Fleet and this made it possible to set up a density of 21 guns per kilometer of front.⁴ As a result of the 15-minutes artillery strike, the Nazi troops suffered serious losses.

As for the counterpreparation fire undertaken at 0600 hours on 24 September upon the orders of the commander of the 42d Army, it was less successful. The problem was that an insignificant amount of artillery was involved in it. The fire density was just 1.5-2 round per minute per hectare. The counterpreparation fire was carried out not by the method of a 15-minute artillery strike, as was indicated in the battle order, but rather by the method of conventional corrected fire against observable targets with a very limited ammunition consumption per target.

During the period of the preparations of the enemy drive against Moscow, the commander of the Western Front, Col Gen I. F. Konev, gave instructions for organizing artillery counterpreparation fire ahead of the front of the 16th, 19th and 20th Armies. In the defensive zones of the 16th and 19th Armies, its task was to check the offensive being prepared by the enemy by neutralizing and destroying the enemy infantry and tanks at the assembly areas and jump-off positions as well as neutralizing the artillery and disrupting troop control and command. The front planned the artillery counterpreparation fire according to four variations depending upon the most probable directions of the Nazi offensive.⁵ The counterpreparation plan indicated what artillery units were to be involved in it by sectors and set the total number of guns for each of them. Depending upon the degree of importance, from 80 to 300 guns were employed in the various sectors, not counting mortars which were assigned by an order of the rifle division commanders.⁶ The largest amount of artillery was assigned for carrying out counterpreparation fire in the event of an enemy offensive between the 16th and 19th Armies. The density of guns and mortars, for example, on the Yartsevo sector was 30 units per km of front.

Detailed plans for artillery counterpreparation fire were worked out by the artillery staffs of the 16th and 19th Armies. Thus, in the 16th Army, artillery fire was basically planned ahead of the center and the right flank of the field force's defenses (on the boundary with the 19th Army) as the most probable sector of an enemy offensive. The artillery subunits and units were given only the areas against which firing was to be carried out. They were to reconnoiter the targets, designate the counterpreparation fire areas and plan the fire against them. Such a situation was explained by the fact that the formation's artillery staff due to the lack of time had not been able to secure the required intelligence data for more concrete planning.

The artillery counterpreparation fire planned in the 16th Army was successfully carried out three times. On 1 October 1941, it thwarted two enemy attempts to go over to the offensive in the center and on the right flank of the field force. On 2 October, the army artillery checked an enemy attack on the axis of Kholm, Svyatets. Here the first battalion of the 475th Infantry Regiment from the Nazi 255th Infantry Division was almost completely wiped out.

Counterpreparation fire was also planned in the area of the 20th Army but its tasks were somewhat different. The field force's artillery was to check the enemy advance by hitting its infantry and tanks in the staging areas and to deny it the possibility of building bridges over the Dnepr and Vop Rivers along which ran the army defensive line. Involved in conducting the artillery counterpreparation fire were 95 guns (the mortars were under the instructions of the rifle division commanders) and an average of around 0.3 units of fire of

ammunition were to be consumed. The firing was to be carried out for 10 minutes (two 5-minute artillery strikes). Unfortunately, the plan could not actually be carried out due to the developing conditions in the combat situation.

In analyzing the experience of artillery counterpreparation fire conducted in the autumn of 1941, it must be pointed out that although they did not produce tangible results due to the insufficient number of involved resources, the strict limit of ammunition and the limited time of firing, in a majority of instances they did disorganize and weaken the enemy assault groupings and put off the time for the start of the enemy attacks.

Artillery counterpreparation fire was also carried out during the period of the defensive engagements at Stalingrad. These were employed with particular effect under the conditions of the battles for the city by the artillery of the 62d Army of the Stalingrad Front which had a significant amount of guns and mortars. The objects of the counterpreparation fire planned and carried out in accord with the decision of the army commander were the enemy personnel, the artillery and mortar batteries and the command posts of the enemy troops. Usually involved in the counterpreparation fire was the conventional artillery of the front and army artillery groups, the antitank regiments, the rifle divisions as well as the rocket artillery.

The battles at Stalingrad showed that with skillful and careful organization of artillery counterpreparation fire and with the prompt opening of fire, serious damage could be caused to the enemy and its attack checked.

The 62d Army conducted its first artillery counterpreparation fire in the morning of 26 September 1942. The purpose was to check an offensive on the axis of Mamayev Kurgan and Dolgiy Ravine by the troops of three enemy infantry divisions: the 100th which had recently arrived in Stalingrad and units from the 379th and 276th which had been concentrated in the area of the airfield.⁷ In accord with the decision of the army commander, the artillery commander of the field force and his staff worked out a plan for artillery counterpreparation fire. This envisaged massed artillery strikes against the troop concentration areas and positions of the enemy staffs; firing to neutralize the most dependably reconnoitered artillery and mortar batteries; blinding and destroying observation posts; firing at individual observable firing points and objectives from concealed firing positions and by direct laying. The type of fire, the density and procedure for carrying it out were set in accord with the importance of the targets, the nature of their shelters and dimensions.

In the counterpreparation fire they planned to use the northern subgroup of the front artillery group (four artillery cannon regiments), an antitank regiment, four rocket artillery regiments and the artillery of four rifle divisions. On the counterpreparation front which equaled almost 2 km this made it possible to establish a density of guns, mortars and rocket combat vehicles up to 100 units per kilometer. The counterpreparation fire was to be carried out for 60 minutes. Of this time, 20 minutes were assigned to three artillery strikes while the remaining time was given over to observable battery fire against individual targets.

The artillery counterpreparation fire commenced at 0530 hours on 26 September and was carried out in accord with the plan. Over the hour around 5,000 gun and mortar shells were consumed (the fire density was almost 8 rounds per minute of the artillery strike per hectare). The enemy suffered great losses in personnel and equipment. That day all its attacks were successfully repelled.

A repeat artillery counterpreparation fire in this same sector was carried out on 27 September 1942 against enemy infantry and tanks which had concentrated for an attack in a kilometer-wide sector in the area of the ravines to the southwest of Mamayev Kurgan. This started upon the end of the enemy artillery softening up (during it our batteries were not neutralized) and developed into a powerful 15-minute artillery strike chiefly against the troops which were on the jump-off line for the attack. This fire strike involved around 150 guns and mortars and three regiments of rocket artillery. As a result of the counterpreparation fire, according to prisoner data, significant losses were caused to two regiments of the Nazi 100th Infantry Division.

Artillery counterpreparation fire was also carried out during the first days of October in the area of the Silicate Plant and the STZ [Stalingrad Tractor Plant] Settlement where, as reconnaissance had established, the enemy had concentrated up to two enemy divisions with tanks in the aim of breaking through our defenses on a front 3 km wide and reaching the Volga.⁸ As a total this involved over 300 guns, mortars and rocket combat vehicles. The counterpreparation fire lasted 40 minutes. At the beginning and end there were 10-minute artillery strikes and between them for 20 minutes the artillery conducted battery fire against individual targets. As a result of the counterpreparation fire the enemy suffered heavy losses and was able to go over to the offensive on this sector only 5 days later after replenishing and regrouping its forces. Characteristic in the organization of this artillery counterpreparation fire was that the army artillery commander due to the lack of time, personally set the tasks for the commanders of the reinforcement artillery regiments who had been summoned to the staff.

The widest in terms of scale and effectiveness was the counterpreparation fire conducted in the Battle of Kursk in the areas of the 13th Army of the Central Front and the 6th and 7th Guards Armies of the Voronezh Front. Special attention to its organization was given long before the start of the defensive operation. Thus, the artillery commander of the Central Front, Lt Gen Art V. I. Kazakov, in the battle order of 22 March 1943 demanded: "The fire of the long-range artillery should basically be planned against the enemy artillery, staffs and defensive centers; the divisional artillery against the lines and areas of the probable staging of forces for the attack...the counterpreparation fire is to be carried out in the form of a brief 5-10-minute strong artillery strike by all the artillery and after it, 15-20 minutes of battery fire."⁹ At approximately the same time the artillery units of the Voronezh Front received instructions on organizing artillery counterpreparation fire. However, the approach to planning the artillery counterpreparation fire, particularly to determining the specific objects to be hit during the period of carrying it out, differed on these fronts. Thus, the command of the Central Front considered it better to focus the basic efforts on countering the enemy artillery, as this would make it possible to check the artillery softening up for the enemy attack and paralyze the actions of enemy artillery during the period of the artillery softening up

for the infantry and tank offensive. Such a decision was justified by the following factors. In the first place, the 13th Army in the zone of which the enemy was most likely to make the main thrust, possessed more reliable data on the enemy artillery grouping and had a significant amount of weapons to combat it. Secondly, since the enemy strike was anticipated on a comparatively narrow sector (32 km), the artillery of the field force had an opportunity to switch to organize repelling of the enemy attack by massed fire. Thirdly, the main defensive zone of the 13th Army was sufficiently strong in antitank terms and well equipped in engineer terms.

The command of the Voronezh Front, in planning the artillery counterpreparation fire, decided to concentrate the basic mass of artillery fire on the assault force of the Nazi attack, the tanks and infantry in the concentration areas. Such a plan was determined by the broader zone of the probable enemy attack (up to 100 km), by the comparatively low average density of antitank artillery (9-10 guns) in comparison with the 13th Army (up to 24 guns) per kilometer and a smaller number of weapons to fight the enemy artillery.

On the Central Front, artillery counterpreparation fire was planned in the area of the 13th Army and on its adjacent flanks to the 48th and 70th Armies following four variations: on the right flank ahead of the front of the 8th and 148th Rifle Divisions; at the center ahead of the front of the 81st Rifle Division; on the left flank ahead of the front of the 15th Rifle Division; simultaneously in the entire zone of the army. Out of the 196 targets which were to be fired on under the last variation, 102 were artillery and mortar batteries and only 34 were the most probable areas of the accumulation of enemy infantry and tanks.

Artillery counterpreparation fire was actually carried out ahead of the front of the entire army. Involved in it were: the regimental artillery, four artillery regiments of the army first echelon rifle divisions, eight mortar regiments, five cannon artillery regiments, six howitzer regiments, six light artillery regiments, four rocket launcher regiments, numbering all in all 967 guns and mortars and up to 100 BM-13 rocket launchers. The overall density was 33.3 guns, mortars and rocket combat vehicles per kilometer. The counterpreparation fire was set for 30 minutes. At the beginning and end of it they planned to make 5-minute artillery strikes. In the interval between them for 20 minutes there was to be battery fire.

The artillery counterpreparation fire in the area of the 13th Army commenced at 0230 hours on 5 July. In contrast to the planned schedule, battery fire was not made against the targets. In succession were two artillery strikes from 595 guns and rocket launchers of 2 rocket artillery regiments¹⁰ in the course of which the enemy artillery batteries and staffs were neutralized in the entire army defensive zone and assembly areas of personnel and observation posts only in the areas of the 81st and 15th Rifle Divisions. Ammunition consumption was 0.25 units of fire. As a total, 50,000 gun and mortar rounds were got off against the enemy.¹¹ As a result, up to 90 artillery batteries and 60 observation posts were neutralized and up to 3 infantry regiments with 6 ammunition dumps being blown up.

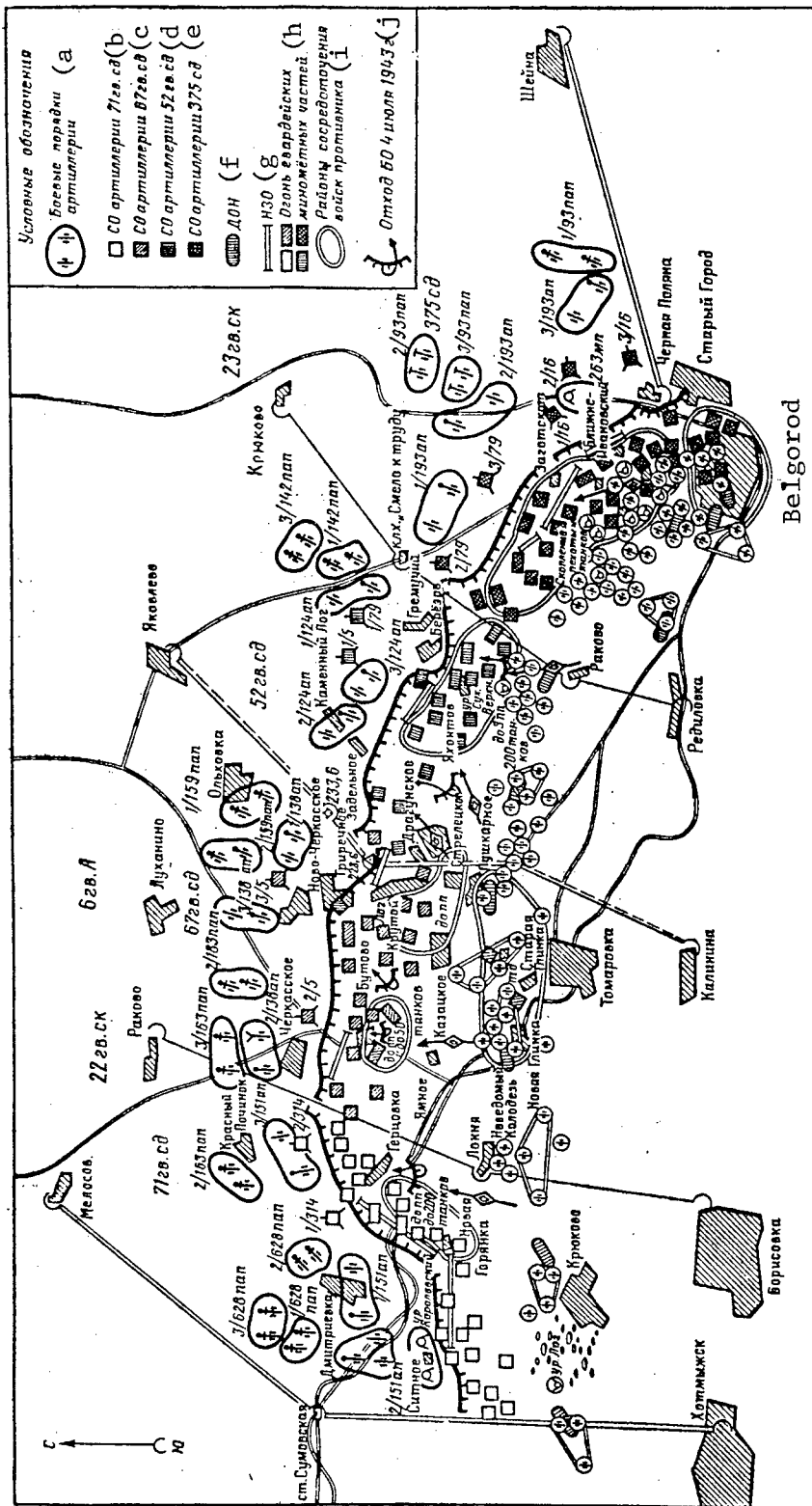


Diagram of Artillery Fire in Planning Counterpreparation Fire in the Area of the 6th Guards Army
(July 1943)

Key: a--Artillery battle formation

b--Concentrated artillery fire of the 71st Guards Rifle Division

c--Concentrated artillery fire of the 87th Guards Rifle Division

d--Concentrated artillery fire of the 52d Guards Rifle Division

e--Concentrated artillery fire of the 375th Rifle Division

f--Long-range harassing fire

g--Standing barrage

h--Fire of rocket launcher units

i--Concentration areas of enemy troops

j--Retreat of BO [?recoilless gun] on 4 July 1943

With the start of the enemy artillery softening up, according to the same plan a second artillery counterpreparation fire was carried out fully ahead of the front of the entire army using the previously designated artillery (1067 guns, mortars and rocket artillery combat vehicles) and an ammunition consumption of 0.25 units of fire. As a whole, the counterpreparation fire caused serious damage to the enemy. Its offensive against the Central Front troops was held up 2.5 hours.¹²

On the Voronezh Front, counterpreparation fire was planned in the zones of the 6th and 7th Guards Armies and the 40th Army. In the 6th Guards Army, the enemy was to be hit by massed fire in 7 areas in which they would neutralize a total of 98 areas of the probable concentration of enemy infantry and tanks, 17 observation posts and 12 artillery and mortar batteries. Here only one variation of firing was planned for. This, naturally, excluded flexibility in preparing it.

Involved in the counterpreparation fire were the regimental and battalion artillery, 4 artillery regiments from the first echelon rifle divisions, 2 cannon artillery brigades, a cannon regiment, 2 mortar regiments and 4 rocket regiments. The length of the counterpreparation fire was set at 30 minutes (a 5-minute artillery strike, 15 minutes of battery fire and a second 10-minute artillery strike).

In the 7th Guards Army, the artillery counterpreparation fire was planned in eight variations, each of which corresponded to one of the assumed areas of the enemy strike.

Involved in the artillery counterpreparation fire were the battalion and regimental artillery (including the 82- and 120-mm mortars), 4 artillery regiments of the first echelon rifle divisions, 3 artillery regiments from the second echelon artillery divisions, 3 cannon regiments, 1 mortar regiment and 2 rocket artillery regiments. The length of counterpreparation fire was planned for 40 minutes but it was actually carried out according to the schedule of the 6th Guards Army.

A particular feature of conducting counterpreparation fire on the Voronezh Front was the fact that the first 5-minute artillery strike against the planned targets (17 basic infantry and tank concentration areas, 12 artillery batteries, 17 observation posts and so forth)¹³ was made at 2230 hours on 4 July upon a decision of the front's commander solely by the artillery of the 6th Guards Army. This was due to the fact that in its area the enemy had undertaken a reconnaissance in force. At dawn of 5 July, the artillery counterpreparation fire was carried out in the area of the 6th and 7th Guards Armies. Ammunition consumption in both armies was 0.5 units of fire. Just in the defense area of the 6th Guards Army, according to the intelligence data, as a result of the counterpreparation fire, 10 artillery batteries were neutralized, 14 observation posts were destroyed, up to 50 tanks were hit, and up to 4,000 enemy soldiers and officers were killed and wounded. The artillery fire plan was disrupted and command of the troops was upset.¹⁴

The losses suffered in the course of counterpreparation fire in the areas of the 6th and 7th Guards Armies forced the Nazi Command to commence the offensive

against the troops of the Voronezh Front 3 hours later than the planned time.¹⁵

In analyzing the results of counterpreparation fire in the course of the Kursk Battle, the representative of Hq SHC, Mar SU G. K. Zhukov, reached the conclusion that both the Central and Voronezh Fronts had begun this too soon, when the enemy troop personnel was still in the shelters and the tanks were in the assembly areas.¹⁶

Artillery counterpreparation fire was also carried out in the third period of the war. The most successful was the counterpreparation fire on 1 July 1944 by the artillery of the 46th Army from the Third Ukrainian Front against the enemy which was preparing for an offensive against our troops which were defending the Kitskanskiy beachhead on the Dnestr. This was carried out with a density of over 90 guns, mortars and rocket artillery combat vehicles per kilometer of front and in essence led to a thwarting of the Nazi troop offensive.¹⁷

As a whole, artillery counterpreparation fire carried out in the course of the defensive operations of the Great Patriotic War played an important role. The basic trends in its organization and conduct were: increasing the average density of the guns, mortars and rocket artillery combat vehicles per kilometer of front, lengthening the time of fire and increasing the consumption of ammunition.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ See "Boyevoy ustav artillerii RKKA" [Artillery Field Manual of the Worker-Peasant Red Army], Part II, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1937, pp 112, 120.
- ² G. Ye. Peredel'skiy, A. I. Tokmakov and G. T. Khoroshilov, "Artilleriya v boyu i operatsii" [Artillery in Combat and An Operation], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, p 111.
- ³ "Ognevoy mek Leningrada" [Fiery Sword of Leningrad], Leningrad, Lenizdat, 1967, pp 26-27.
- ⁴ TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 217, inv. 300435, file 14, sheet 135.
- ⁵ Ibid., folio 208, inv. 2511, file 11, sheet 108.
- ⁶ G. Ye. Peredel'skiy, et al., op. cit., p 113.
- ⁷ K. P. Kazakov, "Vsegda s pekhotoy, vsegda s tankami" [Always With the Infantry, Always With the Tanks], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1973, p 88.
- ⁸ "Sovetskaya artilleriya v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [Soviet Artillery in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1960, p 161.

- ⁹ "Artilleriya v oboronitel'nykh operatsiyakh Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne" [Artillery in the Defensive Operations of the Great Patriotic War], Book II, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1961, p 138.
- ¹⁰ TsAMO, folio 226, inv. 321, file 96, sheet 7.
- ¹¹ V. I. Kazakov, "Artilleriya, ogon'!" [Artillery, Fire!], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1972, p 127.
- ¹² "Istoriya vtoroy mirvoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], vol 7, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1976, p 145.
- ¹³ TsAMO, folio 335, inv. 5113, file 235, sheet 20.
- ¹⁴ A. M. Vasilevskiy, "Delo vsey zhizni" [A Cause of One's Entire Life], Moscow, Politizdat, 1973, p 319.
- ¹⁵ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy....," vol 7, p 145.
- ¹⁶ G. K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], vol 2, Moscow, Nauka, 1974, p 168.
- ¹⁷ "Voyennoye iskusstvo vo vtoroy mirovoy voyne" [Military Art in World War II], Moscow, Izd. Voennoy akademii General'nogo, 1973, p 371.

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BOOK REFUTING WESTERN VIEWS OF WORLD WAR II REVIEWED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 81-83

[Review by Candidate of Historical Sciences, Col (Ret) D. Gorbatenko of the book "Pravda i lozh' o vtoroy mirovoy voyne" (Truth and Falsehood About World War II) by Ye. N. Kul'kov, O. A. Rzheshhevskiy and I. A. Chelyshev, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1983, 334 pages]

[Text] At the end of 1983 Voenizdat published the book "Pravda i lozh' o vtoroy mirovoy voyne" [Truth and Falsehood About World War II]. It is devoted to unmasking the intrigues of forces hostile to us in the area of studying the history of World War II of 1939-1945 and their vain attempts to conceal and intentionally distort the historical truth and "rewrite" the history of events of wartime years.

In the reviewed work, the authors consistently trace how the historiography of World War II has developed in the United States, West Germany, England and many other countries. It provides a scientific analysis of the various currents which have endeavored to elaborate their own methodology for assessing the past and the major events in the 6-year struggle of the world's peoples against fascist aggression. The conclusion which follows from this analysis is unambiguous: whatever stylish clothing the bourgeois ideologists festoon themselves in, whatever theories of "polemology" (p 14) or a "comprehensive" theory of war (p 16) they resort to, their goal is one, that is, to conceal in every possible way the indisputable fact of the direct involvement of U.S., English and French imperialists in the preparations for and initiating of World War II and in attempts even in the 1930's to organize a "crusade" against the USSR with the help of German Nazism and Japanese militarism.

The book includes three chapters: "The Crime of Imperialism and Its Advocates," "The Great Feat of the Soviet Army and the Falsifiers of History," and "The Results and Lessons of World War II." The first chapter analyzes the events which preceded the start of World War II. The authors have torn away the veil of secrecy in which the war arose and which the spiritual heirs of the creators of the so-called "policy of appeasement" would like to bury. They have unmasked the real essence of this policy which was to grant Nazi Germany freedom of action in Europe and provide it with the necessary conditions for the unimpeded capture of foreign lands and for an accelerated preparation for attack on the USSR. The book has convincingly shown that after entering the war

against Nazi Germany, the English and French governments continued a dual policy and did not abandon attempts to come to terms with Hitler.

In a methodologically correct manner the book makes a separate chapter of the events of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany in 1941-1945. Precisely here, on the Soviet-German Front, the fate of World War II as a whole was decided. Having entered into a duel with the Nazi hordes armed to the teeth and representing the assault force of international imperialism, the Soviet people and their Armed Forces, guided and directed by the Communist Party held out in mortal combat against the enemy, they stopped its furious attack and, having achieved a fundamental turning point in the course of military operations, along with the Allies in the anti-Hitler coalition, won a world historical victory over German Nazism and Japanese militarism.

This is something which our ideological opponents do not wish to accept. By every means they have endeavored to play down the role of the Soviet Union in World War II and understate its contribution to achieving victory. The bourgeois falsifiers of history are doing everything to portray as "secondary" events in the war such historic battles as the Battle of Moscow, Leningrad and Kursk. The book discloses all sorts of tricks by Western historians who have endeavored to seem "objective" in the treatment of historical facts.

Close attention should be given to the pages of the book which show with all its unseemliness the hypocritical policy of the U.S. and English ruling circles who contrary to their Allied obligations to the USSR in the concluding stage of the war, endeavored to enter into a conspiracy with Nazi Germany to keep its armed forces for subsequently fighting against our country.

The third chapter of the book which sums up World War II draws the valid conclusion that the victory of the Soviet Union in the Great Patriotic War and the defeat of the forces of fascism and militarism were historically caused and natural (p 219). Real results of World War II teach that socialism is invincible. This is the main lesson of the events which occurred in 1939-1945 in the world. Even under the most unusually severe conditions of the war, in the absence of a second front in Europe, the Soviet Union held out. The book shows well how under the leadership of the Communist Party our people achieved superiority both in economic and military terms over a strong enemy. "The Soviet system," the book states, "provided better forms for organizing the economy not only for carrying out national economic tasks in peacetime but also for mobilizing all the economic capabilities of the nation during the war years" (p 225). In light of this the words of the ideological subversives who in bourgeois historiography of World War II have asserted that the "decisive role" was played by the military and economic aid from the Allies to our nation seem absurd. The book "Pravda i lozh' o vtoroy mirovoy voyne" eloquently and drawing on specific numerical data shows the tendentiousness of such assertions.

In noting the accomplishments of the reviewed work as a whole, it must also be said that it is not devoid of certain shortcomings. Not conforming to reality is the assertion by the authors that "Hq SHC from the very outset of the war correctly determined that the main sector of advance by the Nazi troops would be the western (Moscow) sector. For this reason it concentrated the basic

troop grouping here ahead of time..." (p 115). At the same time, as is evident from the memoirs of Mars SU G. K. Zhukov and A. M. Vasilevskiy, on the eve of the attack by Nazi Germany our command assumed that the basic Wehrmacht forces would be deployed on the southwestern strategic sector and in accord with this had created the troop grouping on the western frontier of the nation in accord with this.

A number of mistakes in the book are related to geography. Thus, on page 146 it states that "the enemy grouping in the spring of 1943 was very quickly bled white and halted by Soviet troops on the Severnyy Donets...." As is known, there is no such river. There is the Severskiy Donets where the described events occurred.

On page 279 it states: "The American falsifiers of history have accused Roosevelt of "giving away" to the Soviet Union Eastern Europe, Southern Sakhalin, the Kuril Islands and Inner Mongolia." Judging from the logic of thought of the U.S. anti-Soviet circles, here it is a question not of Inner but Outer Mongolia, that is, the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic which the imperialists for a long time have not wished to recognize as a sovereign, independent state.

In giving a large number of foreign sources, the authors of the book do not always correctly orient the readers as to who has written what work. For example, E. Lee is called an American historian (p 180), although it is well known that during World War II he was an intelligence officer of the Royal Air Force and after the war published a number of books in England.¹ Among the "American historians in the book is the former general of the Nazi Luftwaffe, Klaus Uebe (p 263).

Regardless of the designated shortcomings, the book "Pravda i lozh' o vtoroy mirovoy voyne" undoubtedly will be a valuable aid for our command and political personnel in their work of indoctrinating the men of the Soviet Armed Forces.

FOOTNOTE

- ¹ See: E. Lee, "Vozdushnaya moshch'" [Air Power], translated from the English, Moscow, Izd-vo inostrannoy literatury, 1958.

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BIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCE ON ALTAY HEROES OF SOVIET UNION REVIEWED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) p 83

[Review by Doctor of Historical Sciences, Prof A. Zhitnikov (deceased) of the book "Zolotyye Zvezdy Altaya" (Gold Stars of the Altay) by I. I. Kuznetsov and I. M. Dzhoga, Barnaul, Altayskoye kniznoye Izdatel'stvo, 1982, 280 pages, illustrations, price 85 kopecks]

[Text] The Altayskoye kniznoye Izdatel'stvo [Altay Book Publishing House] has put out the book "Zolotyye Zvezdy Altaya." This is a reference index which contains information on the Heroes of the Soviet Union whose names are closely tied to Altay Kray.

The very fact of the appearance of the book shows the attention given in the kray to the work in the area of the military patriotic indoctrination of the workers, particularly the youth. The compilers and authors of the book, Prof I. I. Kuznetsov and Lt Col (Ret) I. M. Dzhoga have conducted true research, having disclosed all the natives of the kray and 28 persons who enlisted in the ranks of the Soviet Army in the Altay and who were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for feats in the battles against the enemies of the fatherland. The book also tells of the people awarded this title after the Great Patriotic War. The prepared reference index is a substantial contribution to immortalizing the memory of the defenders of our country. It should be emphasized that prior to the publishing of this book there had been no information in the press whatsoever on certain of the Altay heroes.

The first Heroes of the Soviet Union in Altay Kray appeared even before the Great Patriotic War. The Altaians G. Ya. Kolesnikov, I. N. Mishlyak and S. N. Rassokha distinguished themselves in battles against Japanese militarists at Lake Khasan.

During the war, the number of heroes from Altay Kray rose to 244 persons.

In the postwar period, the test pilots F. D. Bogdanov and M. M. Mikhin, the participant in the conquering of the Arctic V. A. Popov and the Cosmonaut G. S. Titov and V. G. Lazarev became Heroes of the Soviet Union.

The authors of the book "Zolotyye Zvezdy Altaya" have used extensive documentary material, including documents from the Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of

Defense as well as the memoirs of the heroes themselves and their fellow servicemen and publications of the frontline press. All of this has made it possible to compile complete biographies of the heroes containing reliable information on their combat record and lives.

The biographical sketches which show the path of each hero to his feat are not only of informative but also of great indoctrinational significance. Information on the youth of the famous Altaians and their labor tempering in their youth is very important for those who are now starting out in life as well as for those collectives of enterprises, kolkhozes, sovkhozes and institutions of learning which indoctrinate and train the courageous defenders of the motherland. The book has helped in even more vividly propagandizing the remarkable labor and combat feats of our countrymen and these represent an inseparable part of the glorious traditions of the Soviet people as a whole.

The book "Zolotyye Zvezdy Altaya" undoubtedly will find a broad and grateful reader audience.

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BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON ARMY GEN V. A. PEN'KOVSKIY GIVEN

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 84-86

[Article by Mar Art K. Kazakov: "Army Gen Valentin Antonovich Pen'kovskiy (on His 80th Birthday)"]

[Text] On 14 April 1984, Army Gen Valentin Antonovich Pen'kovskiy would have been 80 years old. Of the 65 years that he lived, he dedicated over 47 to serving in the Armed Forces, moving from a Red Armyman to army general.

Valentin Pen'kovskiy spent his youth in fighting against the counterrevolutionary bands in Belorussia and Karelia. The young fighter served well and he liked strict army life. He decided to devote his life to serving in the army.¹

The rapid process of socialist construction and the development of Soviet industry altered the appearance of our army. Service was not easy but we, the young Red Army personnel, in constantly feeling the support and concern of our elder comrades and the party organizations, did everything possible to teach our subordinates to fight in a modern manner. And we ourselves learned. Valentin Antonovich, in endeavoring to gain a profound understanding of military affairs, completed the cavalry courses and then a cavalry school and in September 1927 the Joint Military School imeni TsIK BSSR [Belorussian Central Executive Committee]. By the start of the Great Patriotic War, V. A. Pen'kovskiy was a well trained commander of the Red Army.

The first day of the war. Having received a combat mission at the artillery staff of the Kiev Special Military District, I met with the deputy chief of staff of the air defense zone, Maj Pen'kovskiy. We had to settle the questions of an anti-aircraft cover for the 331st Corps Artillery Regiment which I commanded.

V. A. Pen'kovskiy, having wished me well, began to carry out other immediate tasks. Regardless of the difficulty of the situation, there was not the slightest confusion or fuss in his actions. That was our first meeting.

Having gained combat experience in the initial period of the war, having a good understanding of the tactics of all-arms combat and operational art and in possessing excellent organizational abilities, Col V. A. Pen'kovskiy in May 1942 was appointed commander of the 76th Rifle Division.

On the Stalingrad sector, at the end of July 1942, a very difficult situation had developed. The Nazi troops had initiated combat in the large bend of the Don. In benefiting from their numerical superiority, the Nazi troops broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops on the hills near Kletskaya Station. Covered with dust, and blackened by the intense heat, wind and dust, the commander of the 76th Rifle Division, Col Pen'kovskiy, was constantly among his men on the forward edge. The courage of the Soviet soldiers strengthened in the fierce battles and the incomparable testing of human strength.

In August 1942, Maj Gen V. A. Pen'kovskiy was appointed chief of staff of the 21st Army. From his very first days of work in the new position, Valentin Antonovich devoted a great deal of attention to the professional training of the staff officers and to shaping up the staff sections for carrying out the forthcoming combat missions.

In preparing the counteroffensive at Stalingrad, I, as the chief of the Operations Section of the Artillery Staff of the Red Army, was repeatedly in the 21st Army.

The army staff carried out great work to prepare the troops for the counter-offensive. "High staff efficiency meeting the requirements of conducting modern combat is felt in the ability to literally instantly figure the time for carrying out each measure and then monitor its fulfillment," would describe Valentin Antonovich in those days.²

The organizational work of the command and military council as well as the army staff directed by Gen P. A. Pen'kovskiy produced positive results. In the Battle of Stalingrad, the army troops showed unprecedented tenacity in the defensive battles as well as bravery and boldness on the offensive. The commanders, in skillfully maneuvering the forces and weapons, expertly led the units and subunits. On 16 April 1943, for heroic feats and outstanding combat actions in surrounding and defeating the Nazi troops at Stalingrad, by an Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the 21st Army was turned into the 6th Guards Army. Up to victorious May 1945, Maj Gen (from 13 September 1944 Lt Gen) V. A. Pen'kovskiy was the constant chief of staff of this battle-famous army.

To teach the troops what was essential in war was a law of military life which Gen Pen'kovskiy unswervingly carried out. In employing any pause in combat, the army staff worked out and conducted exercises, it prepared the troops for forthcoming combat and organized various assemblies (for scouts, snipers and other specialists).

In the course of the autumn-winter battles and engagements of 1942-1943, V. A. Pen'kovskiy became established as a professionally trained chief of staff. Now he was capable of handling the most difficult tasks of planning and conducting operations. The ability of Valentin Antonovich to correctly assess and profoundly analyze the situation was particularly apparent in the engagement on the fiery Kursk Salient. On 5 July 1943, bloody battles had broken out there. Suffice it to say that the enemy had thrown up to 300 tanks with infantry into the offensive just against the 51st Guards Rifle Division (the former 76th Rifle Division), but having lost 95 tanks and several "Ferdinand" assault guns in fierce combat, broke off the offensive.³

Fierce battles for the 6th Guards Army near Oboyan' were still continuing and seemingly were reaching their peak. During these difficult days the guardsmen held out. The successful combat of the army was a result of the creative thinking, will and determination of its commander who to a significant degree was backed up by the organizational abilities of the chief of staff.

Broad personal erudition, profound knowledge of the nature of modern combat, enormous enterprise, endeavor and a high sense of responsibility were shown by Valentin Antonovich in leading the staff. Years later Hero of the Soviet Union Col Gen I. M. Chistyakov, the commander of the 21st (6th Guards) Army from October 1942 until the end of the war, in his memoirs wrote: "With rare speed and preciseness V. A. Pen'kovskiy was able to organize the work of all the sections of our army staff for carrying out one or another mission."⁴

The subsequent activities of Valentin Antonovich involved the combat of the 6th Guards Army on the Pskov sector, in the liberation of Belorussia and the Baltic. The broad operational view of V. A. Pen'kovskiy, the rich experience in staff work, a high sense of responsibility for the assigned job and the ability to establish in the staff an atmosphere of creative initiative and mutual aid played an important role both in planning the operations and in ensuring troop command and control in the course of combat operations.

Valentin Antonovich showed his best also in the subsequent period (in the concluding stage of the Shyaulay Operation in the course of the regrouping of the army from the Riga to the Memel sector and in its breakthrough to the Baltic Sea).

In the summer of 1945 I again happened to meet Valentin Antonovich. It was in the Far East. I had assumed command of the artillery of the 1st Red Banner Army and he held the position of chief of staff of the 25th Army. Here, under the difficult conditions of the mountain tayga terrain, in breaking through heavily fortified areas and lines, the 25th Army honorably carried out the set missions and made a significant contribution to liberating the territory of China and North Korea of the Japanese invaders. During these unforgettable days, the army staff headed by Lt Gen V. A. Pen'kovskiy successfully organized the work of ensuring firm troop command and control.

From 1947 Gen P. A. Pen'kovskiy served as the chief of staff of the Carpathian and then the Maritime, Transbaykal and Far Eastern Military Districts. From March 1956, Col Gen, and from 1961 Army Gen P. A. Pen'kovskiy commanded the troops of the Far Eastern and Belorussian Military Districts. In July 1964, he was appointed USSR Deputy Minister of Defense for Combat Training and from May 1968, the military advisor inspector of the Group of General Inspectors of the USSR Ministry of Defense.

For services to the motherland, Army Gen P. A. Pen'kovskiy received two Orders of Lenin, five Orders of the Red Banner, two Orders of Kutuzov First Degree, Orders of Suvorov Second Degree and Kutuzov Second Degree, many medals as well as a foreign order. V. A. Pen'kovskiy took an active part in the sociopolitical life of the nation. From 1961 he was a candidate member of the CPSU Central Committee. He was a deputy of the USSR Supreme Soviet, 5th-7th Sittings, a member of the Central Committee of the Belorussian Communist Party and a deputy of the Belorussian Supreme Soviet.

V. A. Pen'kovskiy died on 26 April 1969. The life and service to the motherland of Army Gen V. A. Pen'kovskiy, a fighter of the Leninist party since 1926, were a duty performed with honor.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Army Gen V. A. Pen'kovskiy was born on 1 (14) April 1904 in Mogilev. For more detail see: VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 4, 1974; "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], vol 6, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1928, p 261.
- ² "Po prikazu Rodiny. Boyevoy put' 6-y gvardeyskoy armii v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne 1941-1945 gg." [By Order of the Motherland. The Campaign Record of the 6th Guards Army in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1971, p 29.
- ³ "Sovetskaya Voyennaya Entsiklopediya," vol 2, p 490.
- ⁴ I. M. Chistyakov, "Sluzhim Otchizne" [We Serve the Fatherland], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1975, pp 84-85.

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FOUNDING, TRADITION OF HEROES OF SOVIET UNION TRACED

Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 4, Apr 84 (signed to press 22 Mar 84) pp 86-90

[Article by Col L. Zaytsev: "The Highest Degree of Merit (on the 50th Anniversary of Establishing the Title of Hero of the Soviet Union)"]

[Text] There is an historical tradition of awarding people for the feats commended by them. This tradition has also been maintained in the world's first worker-peasant state. Even in 1918, a Decree of the VTsIK [All-Russian Central Executive Committee] established the first Soviet order, the Order of the Red Banner. Subsequently, the decoration system was improved. New orders and medals were established and the procedure for awarding them was determined.

Thus, the Decree of the USSR TsIK [Central Executive Committee] of 16 April 1934 introduced the honorary title of Hero of the Soviet Union as the highest degree of merit in the USSR for services to the state involving the committing of an heroic feat.

Many people remember how intensely the entire nation followed the fate of the courageous Arctic sailors from the icebreaker "Chelyuskin" which was seized by the ice and sunk in February 1934. Over 100 persons--the crew and personnel of a scientific expedition--were abandoned on drifting ice. They could only be rescued by air and with the aviation equipment of those times this was not likely. Under the severe conditions of the polar winter and at great risk to their own lives, the Soviet pilots located the Chelyuskin survivors on the ices of the Chukchi Sea. A. V. Lyapidevskiy on 5 March 1934 was the first to reach their camp on an ANT-4 aircraft. Having loaded the women and children on board, he transported them to the continent. Lyapidevskiy was followed by M. T. Slepnev and then five other pilots M. V. Vodop'yanov, I. V. Doronin, N. P. Kamanin, S. A. Levanevskiy and V. S. Molokov. Under most difficult conditions they made their way to the ice camp. On 13 April 1934 the last expedition participants were removed and the unprecedented saga of the Chelyuskin survivors ended happily.

The feat of the courageous pilots who were to be the first Heroes of the Soviet Union stunned the entire world. The governmental telegram addressed to them stated: "Inspired by your heroic work to rescue the Chelyuskin survivors. We are proud of your victory over the forces of nature. We are glad that you justified the finest hopes of the nation and were worthy sons of our great motherland...."¹

For their record non-stop flights the well-known pilots M. M. Gromov (1934), V. P. Chkalov, G. F. Baydukov and A. V. Belyakov (1936) were also awarded the highest decoration of the motherland.

In 1937-1938, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded to the courageous polar explorers E. T. Krenkel', I. D. Papanin, Ye. K. Fedorov, M. I. Shevelev, P. P. Shirshov and O. Yu. Shmidt and to the polar pilots A. D. Alekseyev, M. S. Babushkin, P. G. Golovin and I. P. Mazuruka for active participation in research on the Soviet North. In 1938, the Soviet people learned the names of their courageous daughters, the first women to become Heroes of the Soviet Union. The courageous pilots V. S. Grizodubova, P. D. Osipenko and M. M. Raskova under extremely difficult conditions on the airplane "Rodina" made a non-stop flight from Moscow to the Far East.

In order to specially designate citizens awarded the high title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet in the Ukase of 1 August 1939, established the special medal "Gold Star."²

New heroes were born on the fields of the fierce engagements in the fight against fascism. The Soviet people, loyal to the principles of proletarian internationalism, fought on the walls of Madrid and Guadalajara, on the expanses of the Mediterranean, in the skies of Spain and China, demonstrating examples of courage and valor. The finest representatives of the Soviet land for heroism shown were awarded the highest degree of merit of our country. Some 59 participants in the battles in Spain and 14 pilots who had fought in the skies of China became Heroes of the Soviet Union.³

In 1938-1939, the Soviet military repeatedly had to defend the honor and liberty of the homeland in the struggle against Japanese militarists. Some 96 commanders and soldiers were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union just for heroic feats, courage and valor shown in carrying out combat missions to defeat the Japanese invaders in the area of Lake Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol River.⁴

In showing mass heroism, during the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940, the men of the Army and Navy committed outstanding feats. Over 400 of its participants received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.⁵ As a total by the beginning of 1941, more than 600 persons had become Heroes of the Soviet Union. Five of them, the military pilots S. I. Gritsevets, S. P. Denisov, G. P. Kravchenko, Ya. V. Smushkevich and the well-known researcher of the North I. D. Papanin, had received this title twice.⁶

The Great Patriotic War brought severe hardship for our people. In defending the freedom and independence of the socialist motherland in the fierce battles against the Nazi aggressors, the Soviet people showed unprecedented mass heroism. Inscribed in the chronicle of the combat glory of the Soviet Armed Forces are many pages telling of the infinite courage and valor of the infantrymen, artillery and tank troops, pilots, sailors and soldiers of all specialties.

Over the years of the Great Patriotic War, more than 11,600 persons were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Among them were over 8,000 men of the Ground Forces, including over 4,500 infantrymen, more than 1,800 artillery and mortar troops, over 1,100 tank troops as well as 2,420 men of the Air Forces and more than 500 personnel of the Navy.

Heroic feats during the difficult years of the Great Patriotic War were performed not only by individual soldiers but also by entire troop collectives. The military actions of the defenders of legendary Sevastopol in 1941-1942 became a symbol of valor for the entire Soviet people. However, particularly outstanding was the feat carried out by five Black Sea Fleet sailors on 7 November 1941, the day of celebrating the 24th anniversary of Great October.

In the area of Duvankoy, the 18th Naval Infantry Battalion was on the defensive. The battalion's flank on a likely tank approach was covered by the Red Navymen I. M. Krasnosel'skiy, D. S. Odintsov, Yu. K. Parshin and V. F. Tsibul'ko, headed by the political instructor N. D. Fil'chenkov. They were attacked by seven enemy tanks with infantry. Having destroyed three tanks, the sailors successfully repelled the attack. But soon thereafter the Nazi infantry supported by 15 tanks again attacked the courageous men. They fought the enemy to their last breath. Sn Tsibul'ko with a string of grenades blew up a tank, Fil'chenkov destroyed another and Krasnosel'skiy set two tanks on fire with Molotov cocktails. Tsibul'ko and Krasnosel'skiy were mortally wounded. When they were out of ammunition and there were no more Molotov cocktails, the political instructor Fil'chenkov tied grenades to himself and threw himself under an enemy tank. The others followed his example. The courageous soldiers perished but the enemy was stopped. By the Ukase of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet of 23 October 1942, these five Black Sea Fleet sailors were posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.⁷

In November 1941, the Soviet people learned of the feat of the 28 Panfilov heroes. In March 1943, near Besspalovka Station near Taranovka, in repelling a powerful attack by the Nazi 4th Tank Army against Kharkov, fighting with equal valor were the 25 guardsmen from the platoon of Lt P. N. Shironin of the 78th Guards Rifle Regiment of the 25th Guards Rifle Division. For 5 days the enemy had been pushing toward Taranovka, throwing against the Shironin troops large forces of infantry supported by tanks and air. Seemingly nothing or no one could survive on this clump of ground by the railroad crossing. But the Shironin troops held out. In fierce battles they destroyed 30 tanks, armored personnel carriers and assault guns, around 100 Nazis and did not allow the enemy across the positions held by them. For the unprecedented courage and valor shown by them, all 25 Shironin troops on 18 May 1943 were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.⁸

Here is what was later written about their feat by L. Svoboda, the compatriots of whom were fighting next to the guardsmen from the 78th Regiment: "The Shironin Troops...25 guardsmen. Their heroic feat will always remain a symbol of the combat friendship of the Soviet and Czechoslovak soldiers. They are an example for the Czechoslovak soldiers and officers."⁹

Among the heroes of the Great Patriotic War a large place is rightly held by women, the glorious daughters of their country and courageous Soviet patriots. Among them are pilots and snipers, machine gunners and tank troops, scouts and medical workers. During the last war, the courageous Komsomol member Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya was the first woman to receive the title of Hero of the Soviet Union.

Also inscribed in gold letters in the chronicle of the history of the Great Patriotic War are the hero cities: Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, Volgograd, Minsk,

Odessa, Sevastopol, Novorossiysk, Kerch and Tula. The Brest Fortress was given the honorary title of "Hero Fortress." They are our pride and embody the knightly feat of the Soviet people who defeated the Nazi invaders and defended the honor and independence of the socialist motherland.

A high patriotic upsurge and infinite love for the socialist motherland led the Soviet people to the great feats. Three Gold Stars were received by Mar SU S. M. Budenny and the military pilots, now Mar Avn A. I. Pokryshkin and Col Gen Avn I. N. Kozhedub. Mars SU L. I. Brezhnev and G. K. Zhukov received four medals of Hero of the Soviet Union.

The Heroes of the Soviet Union are people of unbending will, great heart and an embodiment of all the high moral qualities which the Communist Party instills in the Soviet man. Among them are representatives of different nationalities and the most diverse professions. According to data four out of every five Heroes of the Soviet Union were members or candidate members of the CPSU at the moment of awarding this title.

The Soviet people have continued the traditions of the heroes of the prewar years and the war heroes. They are carrying out constantly new feats for the glory of the beloved motherland. In 1961, the highest degree of merit was awarded to the first cosmonaut and citizen of the Soviet Union, Yu. A. Gagarin. Soon thereafter a whole detachment of Soviet cosmonauts joined the family of heroes.

For carrying out a special government assignment, the title of Hero of the Soviet Union was awarded to the leader of the cruise of the nuclear submarine "Leninskiy Komsomol" Rear Adm A. I. Petelin, to the sub's commander Capt 2d Rank L. M. Zhil'tsov and to the commander of the engineering department, Capt 2d Rank R. A. Timofeyev. The highest degree of merit has also been awarded to the test pilots who have given wings to the new supersonic jet aircraft. New heroes are the Border Troops who constantly protect the inviolability of the frontiers of the socialist state and the men of the USSR Armed Forces who carry out their international duty outside the homeland.

The Communist Party has raised more than one generation of courageous and bold sons and daughters of the motherland who are totally dedicated to it. Their feats are living and will live down through the centuries.

FOOTNOTES

¹ G. A. Kolesnikov and A. M. Roshkov, "Ordena i medali SSSR" [Orders and Medals of the USSR], 2d Edition, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 30.

² The medal "Gold Star" is manufactured from gold and weighs 21.5 grams. The medal is a five-pointed star with smooth two-sided arms on the front. The length of an arm is 15 mm. The backside of the medal is smooth, around the edge it is bordered with a fine rim and in the center has an inscription in convex letters: "Hero of the USSR." On the upper arm is the number of the medal. By an ear and link the medal is connected with a rectangular gilded plate covered with a red moire silk ribbon. The width is 20 mm.

- ³ "Istoriya vtoroy mirovoy voyny 1939-1945" [History of World War II of 1939-1945], vol 2, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1974, pp 55, 73.
- ⁴ "Sovetskaya Voenaya Entsiklopediya" [Soviet Military Encyclopedia], vol 8, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1980, pp 354, 367.
- ⁵ VOPROSY ISTORII, No 4, 1964, p 211.
- ⁶ G. A. Kolesnikov, A. M. Rozhkov, op. cit., p 31.
- ⁷ See: "Sovetskaya Voenaya Entsiklopediya," vol 2, p 111.
- ⁸ "Istoriya Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny Sovetskogo Soyuza 1941-1945" [History of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union of 1941-1945], vol 3, Moscow, Voenizdat, 1964, pp 117-118.
- ⁹ L. Svoboda, "Ot Buzuluka do Pragi" [From Buzuluk to Prague], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1969, p 119.

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